Hist of India

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# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTORY
## ES OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

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f Manu, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu, Brihaspati, Narada,
information about Hindu Society. The Puranas
Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahma Purana
constitute the main source of information bet-
the Epic Age and the period before the sixth
ddhist literature such as the Jatakas or the stories
the Buddha, the Tripitakas (three baskets) and
les—Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa—furnish a lot
Jain literature also supplies valuable information.

The Arthasastra—a treatise on statecraft—written by Kautilya is a mine-house of information about the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Mudra-Rakshasa of Visakhadatta is also another piece of information about the Maurya period. Kalidasa's immortal works such as Sakuntala give an account of the social condition of the people during the Gupta period. Devichandraguptam is a political drama which states that Samudra-gupta had an elder son by name Rama-gupta who immediately succeeded him and Chandra-gupta II came after him. The Harsha-charita of Bana is one of the main sources of information about Harsha. The three dramas of Harsha—Ratnavali, Priyadarsika and Naganānda—throw light on the condition of India in the 7th century A. D. "The Gauda-Vaho" or "Slaying of the King of Gauda" of [illegible]ia gives an account of the *Digvijaya* of Yasovarman of Kanauj. [illegible]devacharita of Bilhana deals with the reign of Vikramaditya [illegible]tern Chalukya ruler of Kalyani. The Rajatarangini of Kal-[illegible]ical text of the first order. Written in 1149–50, it forms [illegible] of information about the history of Kashmir from the [illegible], A. D. onwards.

## [illegible]gy

[illegible] department of archaeology is hardly a century old. The [illegible]eans were the forerunners in the field and they took a keen interest in unravelling the history of the past. The work, now, is carried on by Indians. But for the archaeological evidences, the history of India for a period of one thousand years since the fall of the Satavahanas in the third century A. D. would have been scanty. Wherever literary sources lack, archaeology supplies the necessary material to reconstruct the history of the past. It is true that the information furnished by archaeology may be vague and imperfect. But in the absence of other sources, we have to mainly depend upon archaeological evidences such as inscriptions, coins and monuments.

### (a) Inscriptions

Inscriptions on stones and metals serve as a valuable source of information to reconstruct the history of the past. The history of Indian Inscriptions begins with the rock and pillar edicts of Asoka. The inscriptions are an invaluable source of information for the reign of Asoka. They help us to know the extent of Asoka's empire, the accurate regnal periods of his contemporaries in Syria, Egypt, Macedon, etc., about his Dhamma, the steps taken by him to propagate Buddhism abroad, his administrative system, high percentage of literacy, the

culture of the people and above all his character and personality. The post-Asokan inscriptions are of two types, *viz.*, official and private. The official records were only *prasastis* or conventional eulogies of kings written by their court-poets, the historical value of which is hypothetical. But they do throw light on the political history of the country. Some of the inscriptions are the Girnar or Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman I, the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga, the Nasik Inscription of Gautami Balasri, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudra-gupta, the Mandasor Pillar Inscription of Yasodharman of Malwa and the Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II. Among official records, charters pertaining to sale or gift of lands engraved mostly on copper plates constitute the largest number. They supply invaluable historical facts. While the official records form only a very small portion of the inscriptions, the private records constitute the bulk. They help the historian to know the art, religion, and language of the people. The inscriptions as a whole, are the main source of information of ancient India with regard to the political history of the times with ample side support furnished by literary evidence to know the social, religious and economic conditions.

**(b) Coins**

Coins also serve as an important source of information to know the political, chronological, administrative, economic, religious and cultural history of ancient India in a much humbler scale. It patches up a few gaps left out in the general structure of history. Though the evidence supplied by coins is subsidiary, it is substantial. It is from the study of coins that we are able to know that nearly thirty Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers held sway in India. The Gupta rulers issued a variety of coins from which we are able to know the economic prosperity of the country. The Roman coins found in South India give us a clue to the Indo-Roman commercial relations.

**(c) Monuments**

Ancient monuments in the form of buildings, statues of stone and of metal, pottery and other material remains of the past supply concrete evidence to the artistic taste of the people. The excavations conducted in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have revolutionised the conception of ancient Indian history, and takes the history of India as far back as 3,000 B. C. In fixing up the Kushan chronology archaeological evidence was of immense help. In the absence of historical records, archaeological evidence is the only last resort to the historian to recon-

struct the history of the past. The Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain monuments help us to know the history of these sects. They also serve as a clue to the evolution of Indian culture on the artistic side.

## Foreign Accounts

Foreign accounts given by Greek writers, Chinese travellers and Arab writers also supply valuable information about the ancient period. The information supplied by Greek writers such as Herodotus and Ctesias is indirectly derived from Persian sources. The 'Indika' of Megasthenes is a valuable source of information for the study of Chandragupta Maurya. Though the accounts of Greek writers cannot be accepted in toto, they do contain some authentic and interesting information. Special mention must be made of classical writers who made a sincere attempt to picture the geographical and natural history of India. The author of Periplus gives an account of the trade and maritime activities in ancient India. Ptolemy pictured the geographical position of India. Pliny gave an account of the natural resources of India.

The travel accounts of the Chinese travellers like Fa-hien (5th century A. D.) and Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing (7th century A D.) form a valuable source of information about the condition of Buddhism in India. The Chinese travellers visited a number of places in India. The main mission in their lives was to visit the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha and search for the sacred tenets. Fa-hien was so much preoccupied with and immersed in the search and study of the sacred books of Buddhism, that he did not even mention the name of the Emperor in whose empire he spent six years. But here and there he flashes some sidelights on the economic, social and moral life of the people and the administration prevailing under the Guptas. The travel accounts of Fa-hien in spite of their drawbacks and limitations form a valuable source of information for the study of the Gupta period. Among the Chinese travellers, Hiuen Tsang was the only person to record secular matters. His accounts throw a flood of light on Harsha, his system of administration and the political, social, economic and religious condition of the people.

Arab writers began to take interest in the history of India from the 8th century A. D. With the Arab conquest of Sind early in the 8th century A. D. the border lands of India find special mention in Arab historical chronicles. Alberuni, a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni, gave a vivid description of the culture of ancient India.

## 2. CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

India is a vast peninsula with a rich cultural heritage. India, the seat of an ancient civilization, still reminds the people of the splendour that she was. At a time when many of the modern advanced nations were either groping in the dark to know the fundamentals of civilisation or were nowhere in the picture, India could boast of a high degree of civilisation with its rare features of efflorescence and radiance. The culture of the people underwent great changes with the progress of civilization. After all "culture is the efflorescence of civilisation". "Unity in diversity" is the hall-mark of Indian culture. The roots of Indian culture lie deep in the past. With the march and progress of civilisation, the roots got strengthened. It is not an isolated character or mark that goes to make up the culture of India. On the contrary it was a combination of diverse and complex elements of different grades and shades. The Dravidian culture, the Indus Valley culture, the Vedic culture, the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, foreign invasions, the splendour of the Mauryas, Yavana incursions, the Golden Age of the Guptas, the glory of Harsha, the rise of the Rajputs with their diverse cultures, the glory of the Rashtrakutas and the Pallavas, the Chola-Chera-Pandya hegemony, the impact of Islam, the effects of British rule in India and the dazzling brilliance of independent India have all gone a long way in making the culture of India composite and unique.

The study of geography and topography is absolutely essential for the student of history. A study of geography and its influence unfolds many a mystery of the history of the country. Geographically, India can be divided into four distinct regions: (1) The Himalayan mountains with their Western ranges (Sulaiman and Kirthar) and Eastern hills (Patkai, Lushai and Chittagong) and their slopes consisting of Kashmir, Siwalik Tehri-garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan form the first unit. The important peaks in the Himalayas are Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Nanga Prabat and Nanda Devi. (2) The Indo-Gangetic Plain—the second geographical unit—comprises practically the whole of Northern plains stretching from Rajasthan to Bengal. This region is watered by the Indus and the Ganges and their tributaries. The important rivers in this region are the Indus and its five tributaries, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas; Ganges and its important tributaries, Jamna, Chambal, Gomati, Gogra and the Son. (3) Land-locked between the Western Ghats and the Eastern

Ghats and shut in by the Vindhya and Satpura ranges in the north lies the Deccan Plateau. The important rivers in this region are the Narbada, Tapti, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Pennar, Palar, Cauvery, Vaigai and Tamraparani. (4) The narrow strip of land sandwitched between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea and the fertile deltas of the Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Cauveri, Vaigai and Tamraparni forms the fourth geographical unit. The Konkan and Malabar coasts lie in the west and the Coromandel and Golkonda coasts lie in the east of this region.

## Effects of Geography on the History of India

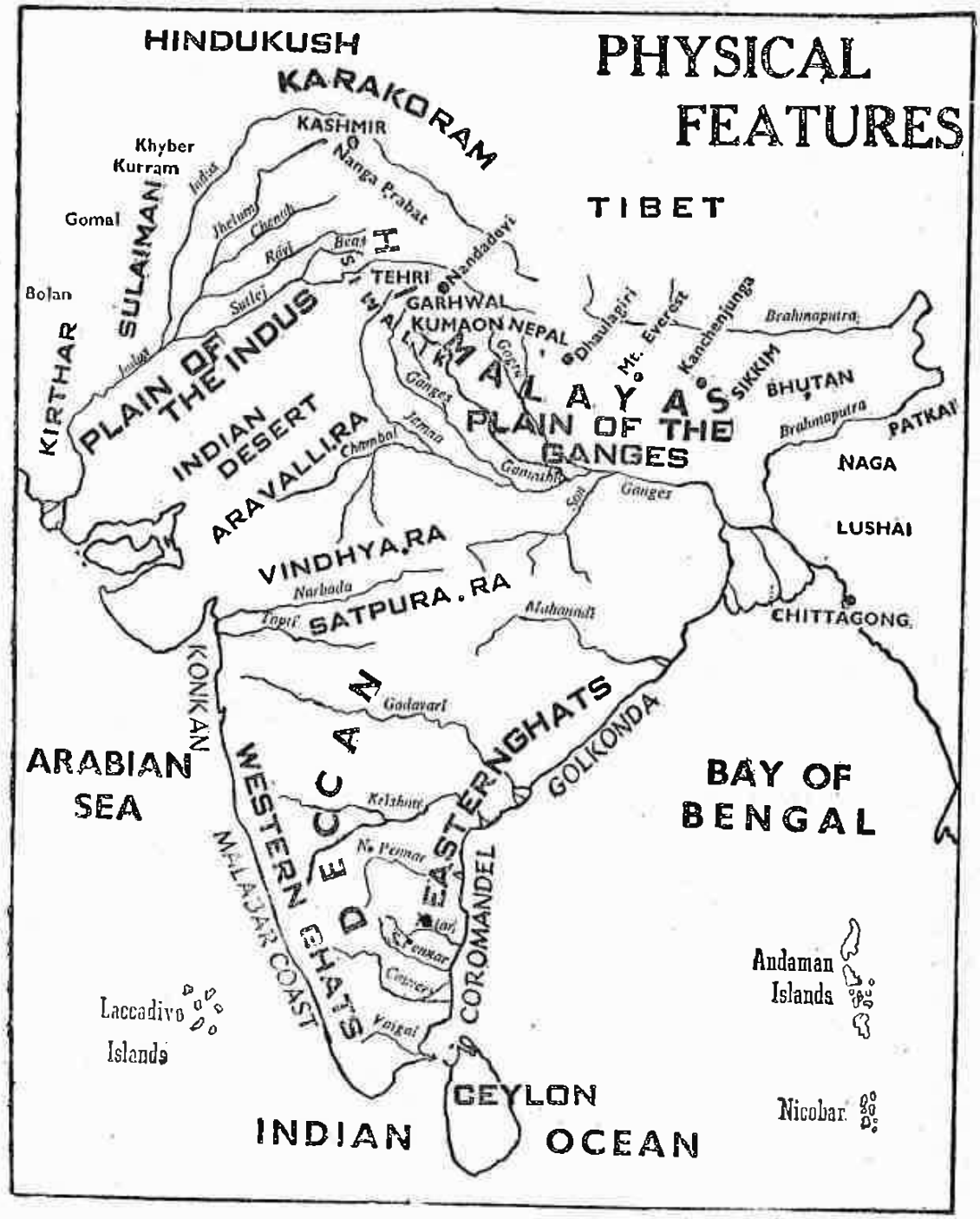
The Himalayas serve as a natural barrier in the North. No invader ever dreamt of invading India by crossing the Himalayas. The impregnability of the Himalayas was only recently broken when China made a massive attack on India. The perennial river system of the North comprising the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra derives its source from the Himalayas. The rivers have brought prosperity and plenty to the Indo-Gangetic area.

The Sulaiman and Hindukush mountains form the offshoots of the Himalayas on the western side. The four important passes in them are the Khyber, Kurram, Gomal and Bolan. It was through these passes that foreigners like Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Tartars and Mughals made inroads into India. Nadir Shah of Persia and Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan also made their entry into India through these passes. Due to lack of proper defence arrangements in the passes, India fell an easy prey many a time to the famished invaders of the far and the near. The intolerable climate prevailing in the north eastern ranges of the Himalayas did not allow the people to have any contact with the eastern world. The passes in the region are rendered inaccessible and inhospitable due to the prevalence of the deadly malarial disease.

The fertility of the Indo-Gangetic plain paved the way for the rise of many empires, the birth of new religions like Jainism and Buddhism and the flowering of political, social, religious and philosophical ideas. It was on this plain that the future of India was determined more than once. The abundance of this region bred indolence and lethargy. So one conqueror after another became in course of time the conquered.

For a long time, the Deccan remained a forbidden land to the Northerners. The Deccan also did not interfere in the politics of

the North for a long time probably due to the natural obstruction caused by the Vindhya and Satpura ranges on the North. The Dravidian culture shone in all its pristine purity in the Deccan. The Deccan served as an asylum for the Jains. The Hindu empire of Vijayanagar




stood forth as the champion of Hinduism when it was being miserably mauled by the Muslims in the North. The maritime enterprises of the Kings of the south created a Cultural Empire or Greater India for the Indians. The river deltas in the South played a dominant part in

South Indian history. The Western and Eastern coasts have a large number of harbours. Brisk trade with foreign countries passed through these harbours. The rulers of India except the Cholas, the Marathas and the British did not attach great importance to the navy. The Mughals completely neglected it. It was this neglect that paved the way for the advent of Europeans.

India is mainly a tropical region. The climate is not at all conducive to sustained effort. It is no wonder that India fell a victim to foreign invaders from cooler regions. The geographical division of the country into a number of units has helped the development of a composite culture in India. The rulers in these units remained highly self-centred and never strove to create a united India. A few rulers like Asoka, Samudra-gupta, Akbar and Aurangzeb partially achieved the goal of a United India. The credit goes to the British for bringing the whole of India under a single sceptre. In spite of the different social and linguistic peculiarities of the people, the effects of the British rule in India paved the way for the rise of a resurgent India. The *coup de grace* effected on August 15, 1947 bears eloquent testimony to the cultural unity of the country.

## 3. THE DRAVIDIANS

### Introduction

Among the various races such as Negrito, Proto-Australoid, Dravidian and Mongoloid which poured into India, the contribution made by the Dravidians to the primitive culture of India is unsurpassed. The history of ancient India has often been written with a biased view giving greater importance to the Aryans. The story of South India is often neglected and the role played by Dravidians and their glorious culture in the making of India has been relegated to the background. Worse still the history of the Dravidians is unfortunately a foot note in many works. Even among recent historians there is a tendency to treat the South Indian history as an appendage to North Indian history. An unbiased view, however, should enable one to appreciate the important part played by the Dravidians in all facets of Indian life. In social and political spheres, in religious and metaphysical realms, in arts and letters, the impact of Dravidian way of life has been singularly unique.

The term 'Dravidian' itself raises controversy. There is a school of thought which believes that 'Dravidian' refers both to the Brahmins and non-Brahmins of southern India while another set of scholars are

inclined to omit Brahmins of South India from the people coming under the head of 'Dravidians'. Even in the earliest recorded literary works of the Dravidians, Brahmins are treated as part of the society. While the breadth of vision and the catholicity of ideas of ancient Dravidian literature are unquestionable, modern scholarship vacillates about the position of Brahmins. Brahmins have been referred to as Dravidians in Saivite literature itself as the outstanding example of Saint Tirujnana-Sambandar indicates. As the fusion of Dravidian and Aryan elements had taken place long ago and not at the present time, it is better to keep an open mind in the use of the term rather than single out a particular section as not coming under the purview. According to the opinion of the linguists, the word "Tamil" is derived from the word "Dravidam" which in course of time got corrupted into Dramilam, Damilam and Tamil.

## Original home of the Dravidians

Equally lively is the controversy over the original home of the Dravidians. Some scholars believe that Dravidians had occupied a vast continent which had connected South Africa and Australia with South India and this continent of Lemuria has submerged into the Indian Ocean. There is no conclusive evidence to prove such a hypothesis though literary evidence indicates the existence of such a continent. There is yet another view maintaining that the whole of Indian sub-continent was occupied by the Dravidians who also the progenitors of the Indus Valley civilisation. Many prominent non-Aryan characteristics of this civilisation appeal in favour of this argument. However, skeletal remains of Indus Valley civilisation, no longer confined to Sindhu basin alone, fail to throw definite light on this aspect. It is pointed out that the Vedic lores constantly pray for victories over Dasas or Dasyus who are supposed to be Dravidians. The positive decipherment of the Indus script alone can unravel the mystery of the Dravidian origin. It cannot be denied that the influence of Dravidians had reached far and wide and it may well be that their original home was the Indian sub-continent itself. Dr. Caldwell has advanced the Central Asian original home for the Dravidians on the basis of the resemblance between the Dravidian words and the Scythian group of languages such as Finnish and Iranian. It can well be argued that this might be due to the spread of Dravidian influence rather than positing that the Dravidians came from Central Asia.

Kanagasabhai Pillai advances the theory that the original home of the Dravidians was in the Tibetan and Himalayan regions. This theory is based on the similarity in the style of construction of temples in Nepal and Kerala and the conception of female chastity held in high esteem in both regions. Further, the letter '*zha*' peculiar to the Tamil language is found in the Tibetan. The Mongolian theory of Pillai fails to strike deep grounds because of the dissimilarity in the physical features of the Mongolians and the Dravidians.

Elliot Smith advanced a theory that the Dravidians came from Egypt. This is based on certain practices such as snake worship, matriarchy, worship of female goddesses and dedication of young girls to temples found common between the two. This theory can be easily brushed aside because it can be argued that these practices might have gone from Tamil Nadu to Egypt.

The generally accepted theory with regard to the original home of the Dravidians is that they came to India from Eastern Mediterranean *via* Mesopotamia and Baluchistan. This theory is based on the linguistic unity and cultural affinity between the two. The similarities found in the language of the two regions and the prevalence of common practices such as the worship of Mother-Goddess, snake worship and matriarchy lend credence to the view. In the words of Nilakanta Sastri: "Dravidian language and culture hark back to the highlands of Anatolia, Armenia and Iran".

The Dravidian civilisation and culture had crystalised into a definite form some hundreds of years prior to the Christian era and of that there can be no doubt. Great works like Tolkappiam and Tirukkural which are more than a compendium of human wisdom could not have been produced by a society beginning its journey towards civilisation. They are the outcome and outpourings of the wisdom of ages. Neither the antiquity nor the glory of Dravidians need be questioned and it is a matter of indisputable fact that the Dravidian ingredients have been of immeasurable value to the fabric of entire Indian life. Towards the beginning of authentic historical period in India, the Dravidian influence dominated over the entire southern peninsula. There was also interaction between Aryan and Dravidian languages. The most representative of Dravidian elements in modern languages is Tamil. Though Telegu, Kannada, *etc.*, come under Dravidian languages they had borrowed large Sanskrit words. The impact of interaction between the two cultures had, by and large, benefited both the

races. In fact the inter-mingling of races had been of such nature that some scholars contend that no purely Aryan or Dravidian people as such exist today.

## The Dravidian Civilisation

By and large a glimpse of the Dravidian way of life and outlook on life can be gathered from ancient Tamil works. They must be taken as representative of the whole of Dravidian civilisation. As opposed to the rural culture of the Aryans, the Dravidians had a highly urbanised civilisation. It is interesting to note that they were a sea-faring people who had well-established commercial relations with far-off countries. Where commerce thrives, urbanization follows. Kingship was the common form of government. The King lived in a fortified city, protected by moats. Learning was greatly patronised and the wandering minstrels enjoyed a high esteem in all the courts. Even in that remote past it was considered a point of honour for the king to expand his kingdom. Accordingly military art was well developed. We can safely infer that the king revelled in the warfare and almost all able-bodied citizens were ever prepared to take up arms. Bows, spears and swords were some of the weapons wielded by them. The king was guided by general laws and traditions of the land. Though his exalted position conferred on him many rights and privileges, the king was ever conscious of the good of the people and the will of the people. He protected the frontiers, encouraged trade and commerce, promoted arts and letters, preserved the laws of the land and considered himself an instrument for sustaining people's all-round prosperity.

People in general had more leisure to pursue higher values of life. They had a cosmopolitan outlook and did not hesitate to assimilate good points from any quarter. They knew the art of agriculture and were good husbandmen. They were experts in weaving. Their pottery was remarkable for variety and durability. Skilled artisans constructed elegant palaces and laid out recreational grounds. The populace celebrated religious and social festivities and generally were buoyant and cheerful

Undoubtedly they were a religious people devoted to the worship of one Supreme Being. Probably some proto-type of Siva was their conception of the Almighty. Muruga was another popular god. The cult of mother-goddess was widely prevalent and sacrifices were offered to propitiate Her.

Society was based on the matriarchal system. The maternal uncle

occupied an exalted place in the family. The customs prescribed the duties of an house-holder. It was a point of pride to entertain guests. The various types of arts and crafts were practised and there was no rigidity or taboo in following different professions. Marriages were arranged by elders and love marriages were not looked down. Begetting children was considered a duty.

They buried their dead though cremation was not unknown. People considered it an honour to face death in battlefield. The heroic deeds in the battlefield have been sung by poets.

## The Impact of Dravidian Culture

The influence of Dravidian culture on the course of subsequent fusion of Indo-Aryan culture was significant. In almost all facets of life, the Dravidian element can be discerned.

In the first place, the urban nature of Dravidian civilization found a ready appeal to the Aryans. The nomadic characteristics of the Aryans began to disappear. This brought in its wake the necessity of developing the art of city-building, fortifying it, creating administrative agencies, encouraging growth of commercial practices, perfection of crafts and promotion of agriculture.

Secondly, the Dravidians who were ship-builders and sea-farers had paved the way for India's continued contact with far-off places through sea. It is not an exaggeration to say that the administration of the Indian sub-continent was in the hands of those settled in India and made it a home until the sea-power was lost in the 16th century A. D. The Dravidian art of naval strength and warfare must principally claim the honours for this insular protection. While the history of North India has often been the story of her conquerors, when once the Aryan-Dravidian fusion had taken place the entire sub-continent was not threatened through the seas due to the legacy of naval skill of the Dravidians.

Thirdly, the Aryans were also indebted to the Dravidians for changes in their forms of worship. When we go through the evidence, we find no reference to idol worship by them in the early period of their settlement in this country. Indra, Varuna, Agni, Yama, Sun, *etc.*, were their important Gods. As is stated, the early Aryans feared nature, then they admired nature and finally they worshipped nature. The impact of Dravidians resulted in the conception of Supreme Trinity controlling the world through the pantheon of subordinate Gods. Siva and Sakti worship were undoubtedly Dravidian. The sacrificial obla-

tions were gradually resisted by a section of the people who were influenced by the Dravidian concept of non-killing. The Aryans were uninhibited meat-eaters. It was the Dravidian influence that gradually changed the higher strata of society to take to vegetarian diet. The replacement of a number of sacrifices by flower-offerings was also due to the impact of the Dravidian culture.

Fourthly, the dress-habits of the Aryans underwent a change. The habit of adorning oneself with jewels, flowers, silk garments *etc.*, was also Dravidian. The tying of Tali or Mangalasutra to the bride was a non-Aryan custom. The use of sacred ash, vermillion, sandal *etc.*, was popularised by the Dravidians.

Fifthly, the functional differences and classifications of Dravidians were taken over by the Aryans into a rigid form resulting in the caste system. The early conception of equality for all was eventually modified into meaningless artificial barriers in the society with birth as the determining factor for following a profession.

In conclusion, it may be said that when once the fusion began to take place between the Aryan and Dravidian cultures, the best elements from both cultures were assimilated to produce the new Hindu society. The lofty metaphysical outlook of the Aryans and the robust practical wisdom of the Dravidans gave forth to a great fusion which lasts until now. In the realm of art and letters, the contribution of the Dravidians is a proud chapter in the annals of Indian history. "In the present-day texture of Hindu culture and religion the warp appears to be Dravidian and the weft Aryan".

## 4. THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

In the valleys of the Indus have been found traces of an urban civilisation that takes the history of India as far back as 3,000 B. C. The discoveries at Harappa in the Punjab and Mohenjo-daro in Sind form a thrilling chapter in the history of India The other important sites of the civilisation are Lothal, Rupar, Rangpur, Chanhu-daro, Amri, Lohumjo-daro, Ali Murad, Jhukar, Ghazi Shah, Alor, *etc* The excavations conducted in these places have revolutionised the conception of ancient Indian history. India can now be bracketed with China, Sumeria, Akkad, Babylonia and Assyria which witnessed the rise of ancient civilisations. A number of seals have been unearthed with few letters written on them. The Finnish scholars claim to have deciphered the script. Rev. Fr. Heras holds the view that the writing on the seals is akin to the Tamil language of the olden days. The ab-

sence of satisfactory explanations to the written records makes it impossible to give a clue to the political history of the region. Further a clear picture of its culture remains blurred. Indus Valley civilisation was highly developed and it might have taken thousands of year to reach that stage. Sir John Marshall has fixed the date of the civilisation between 3,250 and 2,750 B. C. The date of the civilisation is still a matter of dispute among scholars.

### Mohenjo-daro

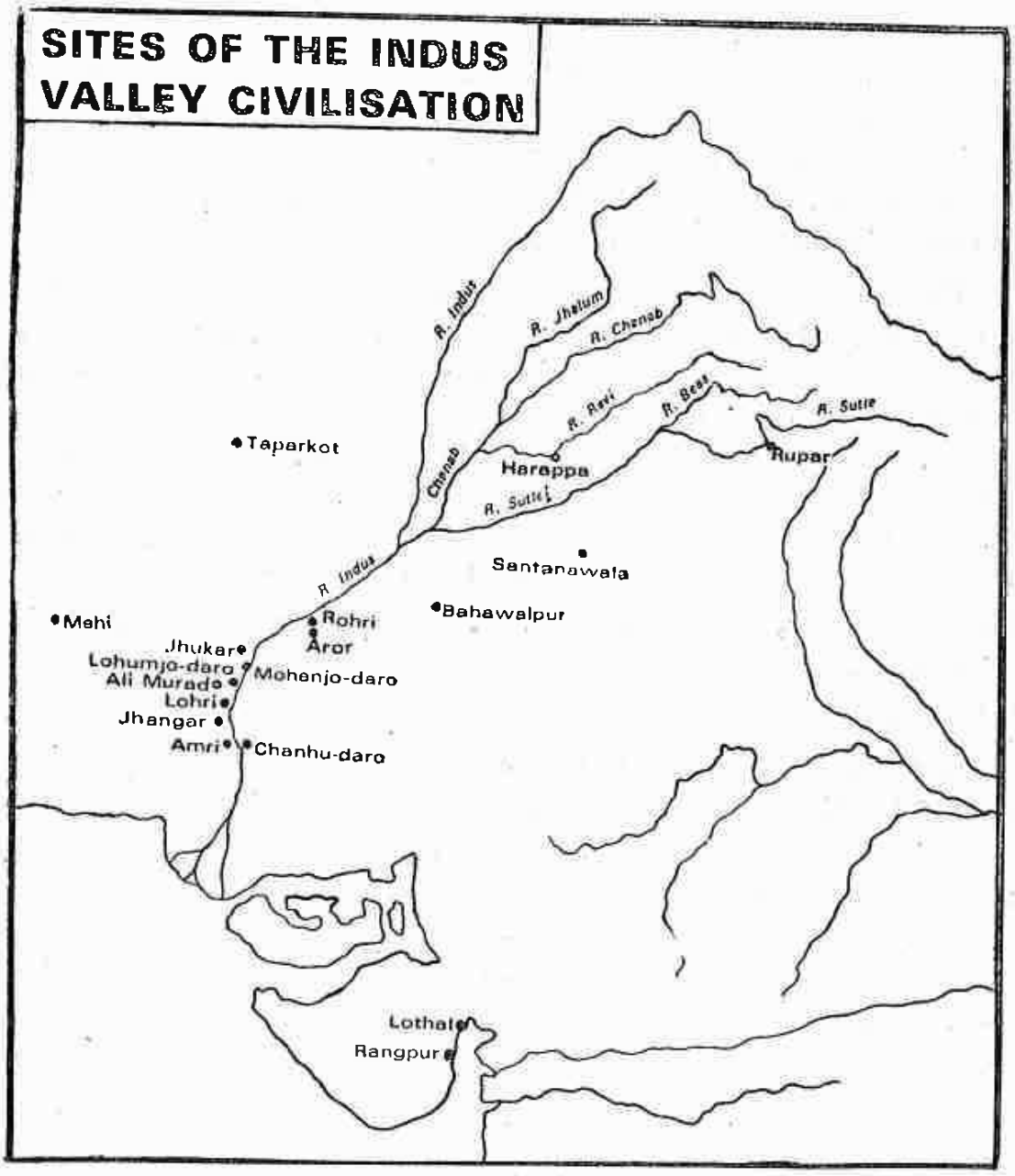
The excavations at Mohenjo-daro—Mound of the Dead—disclosed the fact that the region was very fertile. It is called even today the "Garden of Sind". The excavations further revealed that a succession of cities were built there some five thousand years ago. It was the creation of careful and well-thought-out planning. The city was fairly big. The streets were wide, straight and intersected at right angles dividing the city into squares. Each square was intersected by many narrow lanes crowded with houses. There were big and small houses They were built of burnt bricks. The big houses had two or more storeys and contained neatly paved floors and court-yards, doors, windows, kitchens and narrow stairways. Each lane in the city had a common well. Most of the private houses had private wells, bathrooms and drains. The city was provided with an elaborate drainage system. This was a remarkable feature of the Indus Valley civilisation, the like of which had no parallel in any other contemporary civilisations. The drains from houses on either side led into the street drains. Pipes led from the bathrooms and latrines to the drains. Each house was provided with a dust-bin in the front into which the rubbish was deposited. Provision was made for good drinking water from brick-lined wells. The most dominating structure in the city was the 'Great Bath'. It was 180 feet long and 108 feet wide. Its walls were about 8 feet thick. The discoveries of lamp-posts at intervals indicate the existence of street-lighting. There was also a watch and ward system.

### Harappa

The Harappa ruins brought to light the existence of a huge storehouse or the "Great Granary" and the "Workers' Quarters". It seems probable that the granary was used to store corn which was collected from the peasants as land-tax. The Workers' Quarters "were better dwellings than those in which many Indian coolies live at the present day". On the whole, the excavations at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa throw a flood of light on the comfortable and luxurious life led by the Indus Valley people.

## Social Condition

The people enjoyed all the comforts and conveniences of a highly developed city life. Ornaments made out of gold, silver, copper, ivory and some precious stones were worn by both sexes The food of the people consisted of wheat, barley, palm-dates, milk, mutton, pork, fish




and eggs. The figures of animals, carved on the seals reveal the artistic skill of the people. They were also good sculptors. They developed an art of writing. Weapons of war included axes, spears, daggers, bows, arrows and maces. The sword and defensive weapons like shields and helmets were not used by the Indus Valley people. The dead bodies were usually cremated but on some occasions they were buried. The

favourite amusements of the people were dicing, dancing and singing.

## Economic Condition

The Indus Valley people developed an urban culture. Though the people were town-dwellers, their main occupation was agriculture. Wheat, barley and cotton were the chief crops cultivated by them. The domesticated animals included goats, sheep, humped bulls, cows, buffaloes, camels, elephants and fowls. Dogs were probably known. But there are some doubts about the horse. Bullock-carts were the chief means of conveyance. From the discovery of the Indus Valley seals in Sumeria, it is quite clear that the Indus people carried on extensive and thriving trade with foreign countries.

Though the main occupation of the people was agriculture, they were not indifferent to industry. The potter, weaver, carpenter, blacksmith, goldsmith ivory-worker and stone-cutter were the most important artisans. The people knew spinning and weaving. The women knew knitting. They used cotton and woollen clothes. Indus Valley was the "home of cotton glory". The pottery and metal industries were highly developed. Earthenware vessels of a rich variety were used. They were either painted or plain or glazed. Vessels were also made of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain. Iron was unknown to the Indus Valley people.

## Religion

In a land of religious beliefs and practices, it is strange that no trace of temples has been found in the Indus Valley. In the absence of temples, the seals are the main source of information for the study of the religious convictions of the people. They worshipped a plurality of gods. According to Sir John Marshall the worship of a Mother Goddess was widely prevalent. But according to K. A. N. Sastri, Siva whom the people worshipped in the form of "Pasupathi" or "Lord of Beasts" was the principal deity. In one seal he is represented as seated in a yogic posture surrounded by animals. The worship of trees, stones and animals also seems to have been in practice.

## Differences between the Indus and Vedic civilisations

While the Indus Valley civilisation was urban, complex and luxurious, the Vedic civilisation was rural, simple and agricultural. The Indus Valley people lived in well-built towns. But the Aryans lived in villages. Among the domesticated animals, horse was unknown to the Indus Valley people. But it was known to the Aryans. The sword

and defensive weapons such as shields and helmets were not used by the Indus Valley people. From this it is quite clear that they were a set of peace loving people. But these weapons were used by the Aryans. They often indulged in wars with neighbouring countries from which it is quite clear that they were a warlike people. Iron was unknown to the Indus Valley people. But the Vedic Aryans were quite familiar with iron implements. There were striking differences in the religious beliefs and practices of the two people. The Indus Valley people worshipped Sakti and Siva. The worship of trees and animals was quite common. The Vedic Gods were the forces of nature such as Indra, Varuna and Agni. The worship of images was quite common in the Indus Valley. But the Aryans started worshipping images only during the later Vedic civilisation. The Indus Valley people worshipped the phallus which was bitterly hated by the Aryans While the Indus Valley people venerated the bull, the Aryans venerated the cow. From the discovery of the Indus Valley Seals in Sumeria and other places, it is quite clear that the Indus Valley people carried on extensive and thriving trade with foreign countries. The main occupation of the Aryans was agriculture. Though they did not neglect trade and commerce, we cannot say with certainty that they had commercial relations with foreign countries. The favourite amusements of the Indus Valley people were dicing, dancing and singing. But the Aryans preferred out-door hobbies such as hunting and chariot-racing. While the Aryans grew beards, the Indus Valley people had shaven faces. The fashions of the Indus Valley women with their plaited hair and the rich use of cosmetics have no parallel for their counterparts among the Aryans. The Indus Valley people were dark-complexioned. But the Aryans were fair-complexioned. From the differences found in the two sets of people, it could be safely concluded that "The Indus Valley civilisation was non-Aryan, pre-Aryan and in several respects superior to the Aryan civilisation".

## Conclusion

The authorship of the Indus culture still remains a controversial subject among historians The anthropological evidence attributes the authorship of the Indus Culture to four racial groups of which the Mediterranean group was the predominant. But no scientific accuracy could be expected from this evidence. So the authorship has been attributed to particular races such as Dravidians, Brahuis, Sumerians, Panis, Asuras, Vratyas, Vahikas, Dasas, Nagas, Aryans, *etc.* The

majority view seems to be in favour of the Dravidian origin. But by the way in which the dead bodies were disposed off by the Dravidians among whom burial was the prevalent practice as against the cremation of dead bodies by the Indus people, there is some difficulty in ascribing the authorship to the Dravidians. Though the Brahuis spoke a Dravidian tongue and originated from the Turko-Iranian, there is no conclusive evidence to credit the authorship to the Brahuis. In the absence of any definite idea about the racial features of the Sumerians, the authorship cannot be attributed to them. As no material evidence is available with regard to the Panis, Asuras, Vratyas, Vahikas, Dasas and Nagas, they can be easily brushed aside. As the Indus civilisation is quite different from the Aryan and as the Aryan civilisation sprang up at a quite later period, the authorship cannot be attributed to them. The non-Aryan feature of the Indus Valley culture advanced by Sir John Marshall is now generally accepted by many scholars. In conclusion, it may be pointed out that the Indus Valley culture was predominantly Dravidian in origin although the side effects of other races could not be set aside.

The end of this glorious civilisation was quite sudden. Probably the inundation of the Indus worked the main havoc. The excessive flooding might have forced the people to migrate to other regions. It seems highly probable that the Dasas or Dasyus mentioned in the Rig Veda refer to the Indus people. As they led a life of ease and pleasure neglecting defence arrangements, they might have fallen as easy prey to the Aryans.

## 5. THE ARYANS

### Original home of the Aryans

The recorded history of India begins with the coming of the Aryans. It is a wild-goose-chase to locate the original home of the Aryans. It is worthwhile, however, to mention a few theories put forward by scholars with regard to the original habitat of the Aryans. The Central Asian theory locates the original home of the Aryans in Central Asia, the Central European theory in Central Europe and the theory of the Arctic home in the Arctic regions. There are also other theories which locate the original home of the Aryans in South Russia, Hungary, Germany, Tibet and the Punjab.

### Migration of the Aryans

It seems probable that the first wave of Aryan migrants came through the Khyber and Bolan passes and settled in the Punjab, South-

East Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province and parts of modern Uttar Pradesh, probably between 2,500 and 2,000 B. C. In India proper, the Aryans in the beginning occupied the *Sapta Sindhu* region or the Land of the Seven Rivers *viz* , Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Saraswathi. The *Sapta Sindhu* region included the Punjab and Kashmir on the North, Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Kabul—collectively called Gandhara—on the West, Rajputana on the South and the Gangetic plain on the East. The geographical references made in the Rig-Veda furnish an idea of the territory occupied by the Aryans. The mention of rivers like Kabul (Kubha), Swat (Suvastu), Kurram (Krumu) and the Indus and its five tributaries gives a clue to the occupation of Afghanistan and the Punjab by the Aryans. The Ganges and the Jamna are also mentioned but with little importance. The Narbada was unknown. While the Himalayas is directly mentioned, no mention is made of the Vindhyas. From the above geographical references, it seems quite probable that the penetration of the early Aryans did not reach beyond the Ganges in the east and the Narbada in the south. The Rig-Veda contains frequent references to the fighting of the Aryans with the natives called Dasas or Dasyus. In course of time, the Dasas were pushed out from the *Sapta Sindhu* region.

On the basis of the difference between the languages of the Punjab and the Madhyadesa (U. P ), a modern theory holds the view that a second wave of Aryan migrants with lesser number of women entered through Chitral and Gilgit. They settled in the Madhyadesa—a vast stretch of land extending from the Saraswati to the Gangetic plain due to the dearth of women, it is said that they intermarried with the Dasyus.

## Vedic Literature

The Vedic Literature supplies the main source of information for the study of the political, social, economic and religious condition of the Aryans. Vedic Literature may be divided into three roups falling under three distinct periods The four Samhitas—Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva—come under the first period, the Brahmanas in the second and the Aranyakas and the Upanishads in the third. "Veda" means knowledge. Vedas are hymns or prayer songs addressed to Gods. The Rig-Veda is the oldest and the most important. The generally accepted date for the Rig-Veda is 2,000 B.C. It is a collection of 1017 or 1028 hymns meant to be recited or chanted while making offerings and sacrifices. The Sama Veda is a collection of prayar songs set to tune

or meant to be sung. The Yajur Veda is a guide book for rituals and sacrifices. The Atharva Veda deals with the spells and charms to control the evil spirits. The Brahmanas explain the meaning of the rituals and lay down the minute details of procedure governing Brahmanical sacrifices. The Aranyakas were composed in forests and contain more or less the same material as in the Brahmanas. The Upanishads form the basis of Hindu philosophy. The Rig-Veda comes under early Vedic Literature and the other three Samhitas—Sama, Yajur and Atharva—the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads come under the later Vedic Literature.

## EARLY VEDIC CIVILISATION (2000–1000 B. C.)

### Political Condition

At first the Aryans settled in small villages in the Indo-Gangetic plain. They often fought with the natives called Dasas or Dasyus. In course of time the small villages developed into kingdoms. There was no unity among the Aryan kingdoms. "The Battle of Ten Kings" was an outstanding historical event of the period. The Bharata King Sudas defeated the confederate army of ten other Aryan Kings. The Bharatas, Purus and the Srinjayas were some of the important tribes in the early Vedic period.

The *Rajan* or King occupied the most important position in the tribe. The rituals connected with the coronation of a King indicate the exalted position of the King. The frequent wars among the tribes enhanced the prestige and power of the Kings and made kingship hereditary. But in some cases, the Kings were selected by the people. The foremost duty of the King was to protect the life and property of the people and maintain priests for the performance of sacrifices. He had also to protect the dharma of the land. He acted as the chief judge and supreme military leader. But the evidence for the administration of justice is very scanty. In the day-to-day administration of the country, he was assisted by officers like the Purohita (priest), Senani (leader of the army) and the Gramani (village headman). The Gramani discharged both civil and military duties. Though their function was advisory, much weight was attached to their counsel. The King maintained a vigilant spy system to inform him about the day-to-day happenings in the nook and corner of the country. Though the King had great powers, he never behaved like a despot. His powers were tempered and controlled by the priestly class, the Council of advisers, Sabha and Samiti, Public opinion, Sastras, *etc.* The *Samiti* and *Sabha* were

the popular assemblies of the period.

## Social Condition

The foundation of the social life in the Rig-Vedic period was the patriarchal system, father being the head of the family. The functional or occupational differences and classifications of the Dravidians were taken over by the Aryans into a rigid form resulting in the caste system. In the Rig-Veda there is a reference to the father, mother and son of the same family following three different vocations in life, *viz.*, those of a poet, a grinder of corn and a physician. The Rig-Vedic society was thus not a rigid one. The caste system as such developed only at a later period when a section of the Aryans moved from the Indus region farther east. The Rig-Veda divided the classes into two groups on the basis of Varna or colour—the fair-skinned Aryans consisting of three highest castes of the latter times, (Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya) and the dark-skinned natives called Dasas or Dasyus. Prohibition of inter-dining and intermarriage, the two important features of the caste system, were not at all hinted in the Rig-Veda. The germination of caste system thus took place during the Rig-Vedic period. With the passage of time, even by the time of Yajur and Sama Veda, caste system began to show certain marked features. By the time of the Upanishads the caste system had crystallised into an accepted pattern In the Vedic Age, society was divided into four castes, *viz.*, the Brahmins or priests, the Kshatriyas or warriors, the Vaisyas or traders and the Sudras or the cultivators. Monogamy was the rule. Polygamy was, however, practised but not polyandry. Women occupied an honoured place in Aryan society. As in the case of some goddesses admitted into the pantheon of divinities worshipped, women were not only held in high esteem but were almost considered equal to men in all respects. We do not come across instances of anyone asking or offering dowry in that remote past. Some of the hymns in the Rig-Veda were composed by them. A notable feature of the Aryan society was the absence of child marriage and sati Widows were permitted to remarry. Though the practice of adoption was in force, it was not generally favoured. The food of the people consisted of milk and its products, vegetables and fruits. Meat-eating was common. They drank intoxicating liquors like *Soma* and *Sura*. Hunting was a favourite amusement of the people. The other popular recreations of the period were dicing, chariot racing, dancing and singing. Poetry reached a high degree of perfection. The art of writing was known to them.

Architecture made moderate progress. In the field of medicine, they diagnosed quite a large number of diseases. Considerable progress was achieved in the field of astronomy.

### Economic Condition

The Aryans were primarily a pastoral people. The domesticated animals were the cows, bulls, horses, dogs, goats, sheep and camels. The economic life of the early Aryans centred round their cattle. Wealth was counted in herds. With settled life agriculture became the main occupation and cattle their standby. Though the main occupation was agriculture, they were not indifferent to trade and industry. The goldsmith, blacksmith, carpenter, tanner, weaver and potter were the principal artisans The Aryans carried on thriving trade with distant lands. Trade was based on the barter system. The standard unit of value was the cow. The principal means of transport by land were the chariots and carts drawn by horses and oxen. Asses were used as beasts of burden.

### Religion

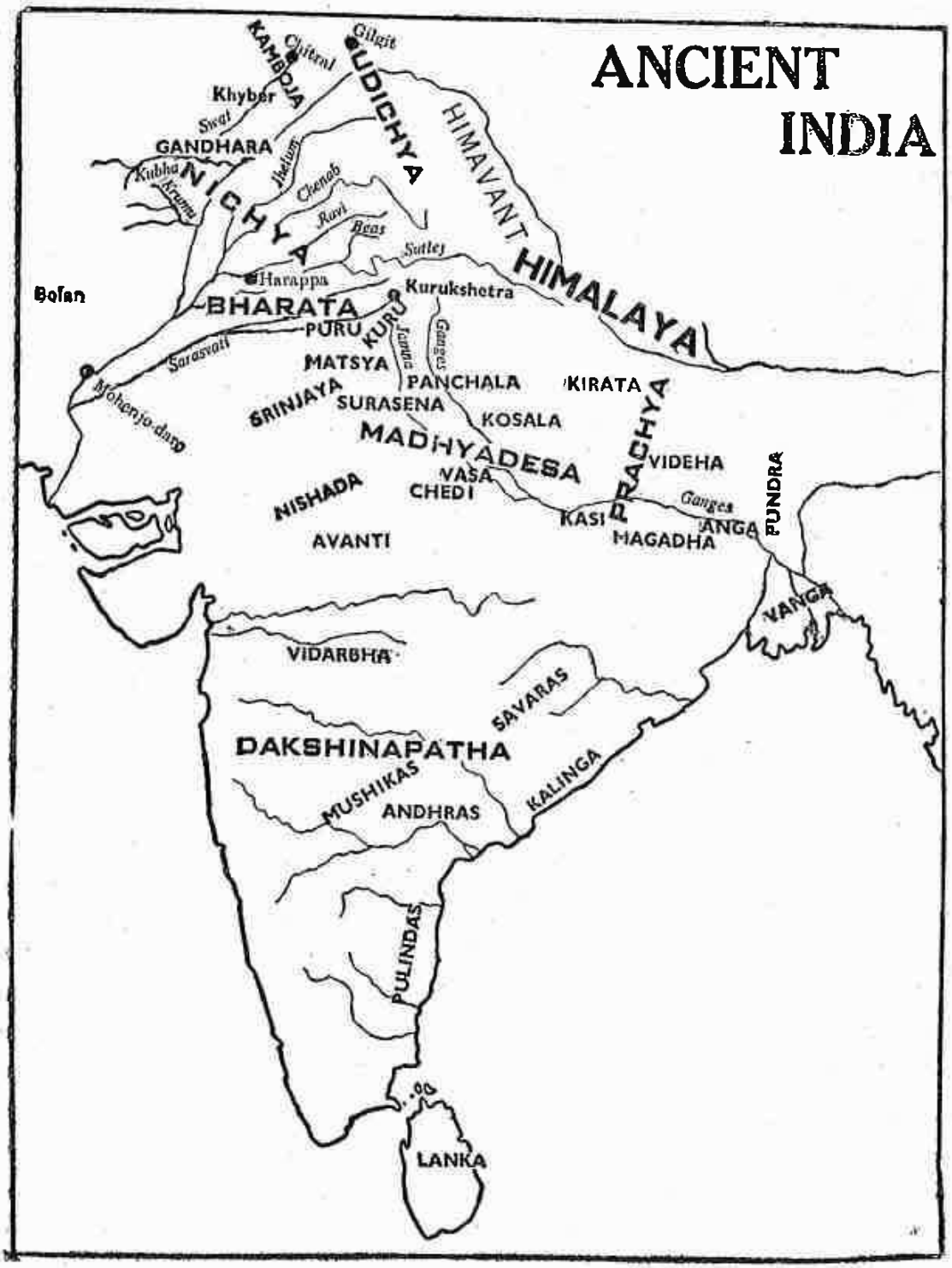
In the beginning the Aryans feared Nature. But later on they admired Nature and finally began to worship the forces of Nature. The early Vedic gods can be classified into three types—the celestial (heavenly) gods, the atmospheric gods and the terrestrial (earthly) gods. As the Aryans worshipped a number of natural forces the multiplication of gods was also great. In course of time, the number of gods swelled and reached the astonishing figure of 33. It was only later on that they began to conceive of higher deities as controlling the natural forces. Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Vishnu, the Adityas, Ushas and the Asvins belong to the celestial group. Indra, Apamnapat, Rudra, Vayu-Vata, Parjanya, Apah and Matarisvan belong to the atmospheric group. Prithivi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati, Rivers, *etc.*, belong to the terrestrial group. The special features of the Vedic religion were the predominant place given to male deities and the absence of temples and images. The Aryans offered sacrifices to propitiate their gods.

## LATER VEDIC CIVILISATION (1000-600 B. C.)

### Political Condition

During the later Vedic Civilisation, the centre of gravity of the political activities of the Aryans shifted from the West to the East. The Bharatas occupied the first place in the roll of honour during the

Early Vedic period; they were now pushed to the background. That position was now taken over by the Kurus and Panchalas. Vatsa (Vasa), Kosala, Videha, and Kasi were the other important kingdoms.




Magadha and Anga lay outside the purview of Aryan culture. A number of small kingdoms existed in the Early Vedic Age. During the Later Vedic Age, the small kingdoms were absorbed by more powerful neighbours and thus a few but big and powerful kingdoms were esta-

blished. With the growth in the size of the kingdoms, the power of the Kings also increased. With the growth of royal power came an increase in the number of officers to help him in the day-to-day administration. The office of the King continued to be hereditary. The frequent wars and unsettled conditions resulted in an enormous growth in the power of the Kings. They claimed the rank of universal Kings. To signalise their rank and position, they performed sacrifices like the *Rajasuya* (Royal consecration), the *Vajapeya* (Drink of strength) and the *Aswamedha* (Horse-sacrifice). The provincial system of government made its appearance during this period.

## Social Condition

The mode of house-building underwent some changes. New recreations like acting came to the fore. The period saw the decline in the social status of women. "This deterioration of her status and dignity went so far as to result in woman being classed with dice and wine, as one of the three chief evils". But the period was not lacking in scholarly women like Gargi and Maitreyi. Women continued to receive a respectable position in her husband's house and no religious ceremony was complete without her participation. However, the general notion that she was not fit to lead an independent life is clear from the injunction that in her young days she should be under the guardianship of her father, during the married-state under the domination of her husband and in the old age in charge of her sons. This indicates the fall in her status. It may also be mentioned that the institution of prostitution came into vogue during the later period. This is evident from the Dharma Sastras which prohibit Brahmins patronising such public women and prescribing severe punishments for lapses. Rules of marriage underwent a great change and there were instances of polyandry and child marriage. Daughters were considered as a source of burden and misery. Dowry system came into vogue. The caste system which was in its nebulous stage during the Early Vedic Age took form and shape. But it continued to remain elastic even during this period. As regards class distinction, the two higher classes *viz.*, the Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed many privileges which were denied to the Vaisyas and Sudras.

## Economic Condition

City-life was perfectly developed. Civilisation really means the art of living in cities. Agriculture continued to be the main occupation of the people. But they were not indifferent to trade and industry.

The profession of the merchants became hereditary. Specialisation of labour came into existence. The barter system was replaced by the coinage (*Nishka*).

### Religion

The religious faith of the people underwent great changes. The early conception of elemental forces as gods gave way to the idea of worshipping supreme beings as the controller of these forces. Indra, Varuna and Agni were superseded by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—conceived as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Modern Hinduism gradually took shape during this period.

## THE EPICS

The Epic Age began from 1000 B. C. and remained for a period of one thousand years. The two great Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—are the Iliad and Odyssey of India. Tradition credits Valmiki as the author of the Ramayana and Vyasa of the Mahabharata. Of the two, the Ramayana is considered as the *Adikavya*. It is the well known story of Rama, the prince of virtue. The Mahabharata deals with the story of the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Ramayana is divided into 7 books and the Mahabharata 18. These two epics present the political, social, economic and religious conditions of the Aryans in the post-Vedic Age.

### Political Condition

During the Ramayana period, the centre of gravity of the Aryan civilisation shifts from the Punjab to the Gangetic plain. During the Mahabharata period, the sphere of influence of the Aryans extended over the greater part of North India. Big and powerful kingdoms came into being. References to terms like *Samrajya* and *Ekrat* during this period obviously indicate the existence of larger kingdoms. Some important kingdoms of the period were Vatsa, Kasi, Mathura, Magadha, Kosala, Avanti, Anga, Kuru and Panchala. Though monarchy was the rule, there were also a few cases of republican form of governments. Though the Kings had great powers, they never behaved like despots. They ruled according to the wishes of the people. For the sake of administrative convenience the kingdoms were divided into a number of units. The lowest unit of administration was the village where the traditional form of government prevailed. The judicial administration was very efficient. But the punishments were very severe. The army consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants

and chariots.

### Social Condition

The social life of the people underwent great changes. City-life developed. Society still consisted of the four divisions based on caste. But it was not very rigid. Women sank in social status. Sati and child marriage were practised. Meat-eating and drinking were looked down with disfavour. Gambling became a favourite entertainment for kings and nobles.

### Economic Condition

Agriculture continued to be the main occupation of the people. New occupations developed leading to various sub-divisions in the caste groups. Trade and industry flourished. The women knew dyeing, embroidery, and basket-making. Coins were also used as medium of exchange.

### Religion

Brahma, Vishnu and Siva were the dominant deities in the Epic Age. Vishnu became the Krishna of the Epic period.

### Conclusion

While the Ramayana emphasizes the path of righteousness and justice, the Mahabharata lays stress on Karma. The Mahabharata contains the essence of Hindu religion and philosophy. It contains the *Bhagavat Gita* which is a call to everyone to do one's duty with the thought of God alone and without the thought of the fruit of the deeds. The two epics have inspired the Sanskrit and vernacular literature of India. They have contributed to the cultural unity of the country

CHAPTER II

# NORTH INDIA FROM 600 TO 325 B.C.

## 1. THE RISE OF BUDDHISM

The sixth century B. C. was one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the world. It was an era of great teachers like Buddha, Mahavira, Heraclitus, Isaiah, Confucious and Lao Tse. It was also an age of enquiry and doubt. In India people were dissatisfied with the Vedic religion and the bloody sacrifices involved in it. So there was a great religious unrest. The Vedic religion was not able to satisfy the spiritual desires of the masses. Therefore, a new religion became necessary for the people. Buddhism and Jainism arose as a result of this religious unrest.

### CAREER OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA (567-487 B.C.)

#### Early life

Siddhartha Gautama was the founder of Buddhism. He was born in Lumbinivana at Kapilavastu in 567 B.C. He belonged to an aristocratic family of the Sakya clan of Kapilavastu. He was the son of Suddhodana, the chief of the Sakya clan. Suddhodana's wife Mayadevi died seven days after the birth of the child. So he was brought up by Prajapati Gautami, the sister of Mayadevi. Gautama married Yasodhara and had a son Rahula by name Born in luxuries and bred in affluence, Siddhartha led a life of ease and pleasure. After seeing an old man, a diseased man, a dead man and a saint, he gave up the comforts and pleasures of princely life and took to the life of a wandering hermit at the age of 29. He determined to find out the cause of sorrow and the way of release from it. His early attempt in his experiment with truth under two teachers failed. He practised severe penance and asceticism. But pain and starvation failed to satisfy his inner urge. So he took to deep meditation. At the age of 35 while seated under a pipal tree near Gaya in deep meditation, the light of knowledge flashed on him. Thenceforward, he came to be known as the "Buddha" or the "enlightened one".

#### Buddha's Teachings

Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath near Benaras to five Brahmin ascetics. He taught his followers the four truths concerning suffering, the cause of suffering, the destruction of suffering and the

way or the path to be adopted for the destruction of suffering. According to him, all the sorrows of mankind were due to selfish desire of three kinds. They were the desire to give pleasure to the senses of the body, the desire to live long in this world and the desire to own property and to be respected by others. If a man can conquer all these desires, he can live happily even in this world. The way to get rid of the pleasures of life does not lie either in the pursuit of pleasure or in inflicting pain into the body. There is a middle path between the two extremes, *viz.*, 'the Noble eight-fold path'. The eight steps are Right Views, Right Aims, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation. This path leads to *Nirvana* which means a peaceful state free from all desires. It is the final result of the extinction of the desire. Buddhism lays stress on Ahimsa and the Hindu doctrines of Karma and transmigration of souls. For 45 years Buddha roamed about as a wandering teacher proclaiming his gospel to princes and people of North India. He died at the age of 80 at Kusinagara.

## Sacred Literature of the Buddhists

Buddha laid the foundation of the Buddhist Sangha or the Order of monks and nuns. The sacred literature of the Buddhists is collectively known as the *Tripitaka* (three baskets). The *Sutta-pitaka* deals with the religious discourses of the Buddha. The *Vinaya-pitaka* lays down rules and regulations for proper conduct of the Buddhist monks and nuns and the management of the Buddhist Church. The *Abhidhamma-pitaka* expounds the philosophical principles enshrined in Buddhism. Among the sacred literature of the Buddhists mention should be made of the *Jatakas* or stories of the previous lives of the Buddha.

## The Four Buddhist Councils

Shortly after the death of the Buddha, the First Buddhist Council was convened at Rajagriha by his disciples. The teachings of the Buddha were collected and classified. The Second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali, a century after the death of the Buddha. The Coucil aimed at settling the differences in the practices observed by the monks. In spite of the attempts, the Buddhist Church got divided into two sections. The Third Buddhist Council was convened at Pataliputra by Asoka. The *Abhidhamma-pitaka* was incorporated with the sacred literature of the Buddhists during the occasion. The Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir or Jullundur during the rule of Kanishka. The Council patched up the differences among the rival

sections and prepared three authoritative commentaries on the *Pitakas* known as *Vibhashas.*

## Progress of Buddhism

The Buddhist Sangha was a powerful body which spread the religion in the distant parts of the world. It had the royal patronage of Kings like Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha. It was Asoka who raised Buddhism to the status of a State religion and made it universal. He undertook many effective steps to spread Buddhism in every nook and corner of the world. He organised missions for the propagation of Buddhism. Missionaries were sent to Ceylon, Egypt, Macedonia, Syria and other places. He sent his own son and daughter on a mission to Ceylon. Devanampiya-Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon, was converted to the Buddhist faith. The greatest contribution made by Asoka to Buddhism was that he raised a local religion from the relativ neglect into which it had fallen to the status of a world religion. Buddhism took deep roots in China by the end of the 6th century A. D. The famous Chinese pilgrims—Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing—came to India to see the holy places of Buddhism. China acted as a stepping-stone for the dissemination of Buddhism in Japan in the 6th century A. D. In due course, Buddhism spread to other places like Burma, Tibet, Sumatra and Java.

## Buddhist Heritage

The Buddhists made some notable contributions to the development of art, architecture, sculpture and literature. In the field of architecture, their valuable contributions were the Stupas and Chaityas. The Stupas are shrines where the relics of Buddha are preserved. The Chaityas are rock-cut temples meant for religious meetings and worship. Some of the famous Stupas are at Sanchi, Sarnath, Amaravathi and Nagarjunikonda. Some of the famous Chaityas are at Barbara, Jumnar, Bhaja and Ajanta. The Asokan pillars through which Asoka propagated Buddhism are the best specimens of the sculpture of the period. The Gandhara School of Art which flourished during the time of Kanishka produced some fine specimens of sculptural works The Nalanda University served as a literary centre for the diffusion of Buddhist doctrines.

## Downfall of Buddhism

Buddhism exercised a profound influence on Hindu life and thought The adoption of Ahimsa as a code of conduct by the Hindus was directly taken from Buddhism. It failed to take deep roots in the land

of its own birth. It did not effect any change in the social structure. So, in course of time, the best principles in Buddhism were absorbed by Hinduism. Buddhism got divided into two sects—Hinayana and Mahayana. In the Hinayana form of Buddhism, Buddha was not worshipped as a God. The deification of Buddha is an important feature of the Mahayana form. With the passage of time, the Buddhist Sangha became corrupt beyond measure. The Alwars and Nayanmars revived Vaishnavism and Saivism. The final overthrow of Buddhism was effected by Sankaracharya and Ramanuja. The loss of royal patronage led to the decline of Buddhism. With the advent of the Huns and the Muslims, the caste system became very rigid and led to the downfall of Buddhism.

## Estimate of the Buddha

In an age of religious unrest, Buddha stood forth as the first apostle who preached peace and piety among one and all. He possessed an extraordinarily striking personality. He moved among the masses and set up an example to them by practising what he preached. By returning good for evil he became "the Great Tamer of the untamed hearts". His simple parables and similies had a telling effect on the people who approached him for comfort and consolation. Like Jesus Christ, Buddha appealed to the people to conquer hatred by love. Both Buddha and Jesus laid emphasis on the purity of the mind, blessed the peace-makers and stood forth as champions of the down-trodden and the oppressed While the teachings of Jesus touched the conscience of the people, those of the Buddha appealed to the intellect. The Dharma of the Buddha which emphasised Ahimsa or non-injury to living beings exercised a profound influence on the life of the people. With malice towards none and with charity for all, Buddha relentlessly carried on his mission of mercy and campaign for compassion among the laymen and the laity. Buddha, " The Light of Asia", richly deserves to be called by the better and exalted title "The Light of the World".

Buddha was a pioneer in organising monasteries. These monasteries became the fore-runners of their counterparts started under the shadow of different religions. The democratic spirit of Buddha is revealed in the fact that he threw open his religion to all castes. In the words of Havell, "The success of Gautama's vision must have been due partly to his own magnetic personality and the deep human feeling which inspired his teachings and partly to the fact that

he opened wide the doors of Aryan religion and satisfied the spiritual desires of masses by offering them a religious law easy to understand and accessible to all, free from elaborate and costly ceremonial, raising the social status of the lower orders, giving them their spiritual freedom and making the life of the community healthier and happier".

## 2. THE RISE OF JAINISM

### CAREER OF MAHAVIRA (539-467 B. C.)

#### Early life

Vardhamana Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, was born at Kundagrama near Vaisali in 539 B. C. He was the son of Siddhartha and Trisala. His father was a nobleman of the Naya clan. Jain tradition speaks of twenty-four *Tirthankaras* (Pathfinders or Prophets). The last two prophets were Parsvanath and Mahavira. Mahavira married Yasoda and had a daughter Anoja by name. He became a monk after the death of his parents as he did not want to wound their feelings. At the age of 30, he left his home with the permission of his elder brother Nandi Vardhana. He roamed about as a naked ascetic doing severe penance for 12 years. At the age of 42 wisdom dawned on him. He came to be known as the Jina (The Conqueror) and Mahavira (The great hero). For 30 years he wandered about as a religious teacher propagating his new doctrine. He breathed his last at Pava near Rajagriha in 467 B. C. at the age of 72.

#### Mahavira's Teachings

Mahavira was an ardent believer in the unity and universality of life. He preached that even 'inanimate' objects like plants and trees have life. The aim of Jainism is to attain salvation or freedom of the souls from the bonds of this world. Mahavira accepted the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration of souls. He said that birth, death, sorrow and suffering are due to the accumulation of evil Karma in previous births. To get rid of sufferings and attain salvation, the Karma should be made pure. To make it pure, he preached '*Triratna*' or "Three Jewels" *viz* , Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Right Faith implies that salvation can be attained only if the belief is right. Right Knowledge suggests that the Universe can be understood only by knowing the principles of Jainism. Right Conduct lies in the observance of five moral principles, *viz.*, Ahimsa, Telling truth, Possessing no property, Non-stealing and Chastity in word, thought and deed. He laid emphasis on asceticism and ahimsa. He

carried to extremes the principle of ahimsa or non-injury to living beings. He denied the existence of God. He advocated death through slow starvation in order to attain salvation. He also organised a Sangha on the Buddhist model to propagate the faith.

### Progress and Decline of Jainism

From the very beginning Jainism also enjoyed royal patronage Jainism was confined to India and never attempted distant conquests. Its chief activity was in Gujarat, Mathura and Rajputana. There are more Jains than Buddhists in India. Jainism was only a branch of Hinduism and never adopted an active missionary policy. Hence it was not attacked by the champions of Hinduism. Later on Jainism got divided into two sects—the *Svetambaras* (the white-robed) and the *Digambaras* (the sky-clad). As Jainism advocated extreme asceticism and overstressed Ahimsa, it became a difficult religion to embrace.

### Legacy of Jainism

Jainism greatly enriched art, architecture, sculpture and literature. The Jain caves at Udayagiri, Khandagiri, Ellora, Mount Abu and Ranpur are their contributions in the field of architecture. Tamil literature was greatly enriched by Jainism. Jivaka Chinthamani, written by Tiruthakkathevar is a major Jain work. Jain writers wrote poetry, drama, moral tales and philosophy. Hemachandra of Gujarat was the greatest Jain writer. Painting was developed on a humbler scale by the Jains.

### Buddhism and Jainism compared

There is a similarity in the life of Buddha and Mahavira. Kshatriyas by birth, both of them founded their religions as a reaction against the Vedic religion. Buddhism and Jainism were branches of Hinduism. Buddha and Mahavira accepted the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration of souls They rejected the authority of the Vedas and condemned the bloody sacrifices involved in them. Philosophically both religions had 'sorrow' as the starting point. Both laid special stress on the practice of Ahimsa. They preached in the vernacular languages which appealed to the masses. Both threw open their religion to all classes and depended upon the support of their respective sanghas for spreading their doctrines.

In spite of these similarities, there are some fundamental differences between the two religions. Mahavira advocated extreme asceticism and self mortification. Buddha laid stress on the Middle Path between extreme asceticism and extreme worldliness. Both religious

leaders had no veneration for the Vedic Gods. While Mahavira denied the existence of God, Buddha did not mention God. While Jainism followed some of the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, Buddhism totally abandoned them.

## 3. THE RISE OF MAGADHA

Due to paucity of information, it is very difficult to form an adequate idea of the political condition of India before the 6th century B. C. The main sources of information for the study of the political history of India from the 6th century B. C. down to the 4th century B. C. are the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature. Among Buddhist sources, special mention should be made of the *Jatakas* (stories of the previous lives of the Buddha) which form a very valuable source of information.

### Mahajanapadas

The sixteen kingdoms—Mahajanapadas—which existed in the 6th century B. C. were: (1) Assaka (Asmaka) with Potana or Potali as the capital, (2) Avanti with Ujjain and Mahishmati as capital cities, (3) Chedi with Suktimati (near Banda in U. P.) as the capital, (4) Anga with Champa as the capital, (5) Vajji with Vaisali as capital, (6) Magadha with Girivraja (a hill fortress) as capital and later transferred by Bimbisara to Rajagriha at the foot of the hills and again transferred to Pataliputra, (7) Malla with Kusinagara and Pava as capital cities, (8) Kasi with Varanasi as the capital, (9) Vamsa or Vatsa with Kausambi as the capital, (10) Kosala with capitals at Sravasti in the north and Kusavati in the south, (11) Panchala with Ahichchhatra and Kampilya as capital cities, (12) Surasena with Mathura as capital, (13) Kuru with Indraprastha as the capital, (14) Matsya with Viratanagara as the capital, (15) Gandhara with Taxila as the capital, and (16) Kamboja with Dwaraka as the capital. Among the 16 Mahajanapadas, Kosala, Magadha, Avanti and Vatsa were the most important kingdoms. In the 6th century B. C., Magadha occupied the first place in the roll of honour.

### Saisunaga Dynasty

The Puranic and Buddhist traditions give different versions with regard to the line of Kings who occupied the throne of Magadha in the 6th and 5th centuries B. C. According to the Puranic version, the Saisunaga dynasty was founded by Sisunaga. But the Buddhist version

places him as the seventh King in the line of succession and divides the line of Kings into two groups—the Haryanka and the Saisunaga. According to the Puranic version, the list of Kings is in the following order: (1) Sisunaga, (2) Kakavarna, (3) Kshemadharman, (4) Kshatraujas, (5) Bimbisara, (6) Ajathasatru, (7) Darsaka, (8) Udayin, (9) Nandivardhana, and (10) Mahanandin. The Buddhist version lists in the following order: (1) Bimbisara, (2) Ajathasatru, (3) Udayabhadra, (4) Anuruddha, (5) Munda, (6) Nagadasaka, (7) Sisunaga, (8) Kalasoka, and (9) the ten sons of Kalasoka. The Buddhist version is accepted by most Indian scholars. Vincent Smith subscribes to the Puranic version.

## Bimbisara

Following the Buddhist version, Bimbisara of the Haryanka family ruled over Magadha in the middle of the 6th century B. C with Girivraja, a hill fortress, as the capital city. The information with regard to the predecessors of Bimbisara is very scanty. He raised the power and prestige of Magadha and sowed the seeds for its political ascendancy. He strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances with Kosala and the Lichchhavis of Vaisali. His matrimonial alliance with Kosala earned for him the Kasi village as dowry. He conquered and annexed the adjacent kingdom of Anga. He built a city called Rajagriha at the foot of the hills of Girivraja. Magadha grew to be a flourishing and prosperous kingdom under his paternal care. He was a contemporary of the Buddha and Mahavira. Both Buddhists and Jains claim Bimbisara as their follower and benefactor.

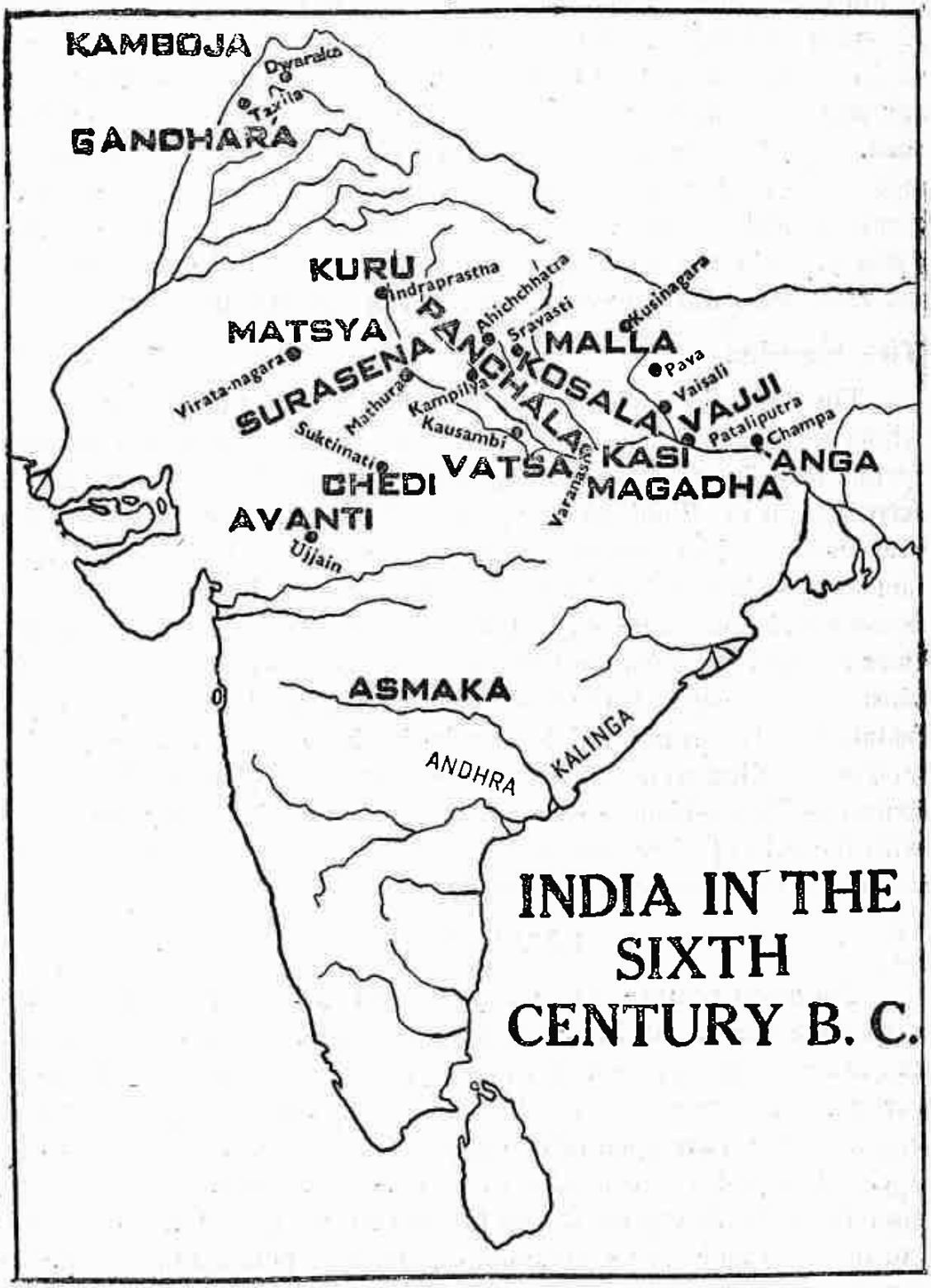
## Ajathasatru

If Buddhist tradition is to be believed, Ajathasatru came to power after killing his father Bimbisara. But Dr. Smith believes that this was only a myth concocted by Buddhist chroniclers to denigrate his memory for his leanings towards Jainism. Like his father, Ajathasatru also entered into a career of conquest. Kosala and Vaisali formed a dangerous confederacy against him. After sixteen years of fighting, he won a resounding victory over the confederate army. He humbled Kosala and incorporated Vaisali with the Magadhan Kingdom. In order to strengthen the defence of the country during the war, he fortified the village of Pataligrama on the banks of the river Son. Thus he laid the foundation of the new capital city which later on came to be known as Pataliputra. Ajathasatru was a contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira. Both Buddhists

and Jains claim him as their follower and benefactor.

## Successors of Ajathasatru

According to the Puranic version, the successors of Ajathasatru




were Darsaka, Udayin, Nandivardhana and Mahanandin. But according to the Buddhist version, he was succeeded by Udayabhadra, Anu-

ruddha. Munda, Nagadasaka, Sisunaga, Kalasoka and the ten sons of Kalasoka. The four kings who immediately succeeded Ajathasatru were parricides. The people got disgusted with the rule of a dynasty of murderers and therefore placed the minister Sisunaga on the throne. He made Girivraja his capital. He crushed the power of the Pradyotas of Avanti and added it to Magadha. It seems probable that he also annexed Vatsa and Kosala. Sisunaga was succeeded by his son Kalasoka. He transferred his capital from Girivraja to Pataliputra. He met with a fatal end as a result of a dagger thrust in his throat. It seems probable that the murderer was the founder of the Nanda dynasty. The ten sons of Kalasoka who jointly ruled for a period of ten years were also slain by the founder of the next dynasty.

### The Nandas

The chronology of the Nandas is also a matter of dispute among scholars. According to the Jain version, the nine Nandas ruled for a period of 155 years, 100 years according to the Puranas and 22 years according to the Buddhist Chronicles of Ceylon. Some writers interpret 'nava' in Navananda to mean 'new' and not 'nine'. But if tradition is to be believed Mahapadma Nanda was the founder of the Nanda dynasty and there were in all 9 Kings in the line. The Puranas consider the first King as the father and the rest as sons. But the Buddhist texts consider all the Nandas as brothers. It is said that Mahapadma Nanda was not a Kshatriya by birth. Despite this fact, he was a powerful King who left behind a vast empire. The last King of the dynasty—Dhana-Nanda—was overthrown by Chandragupta Maurya with the help of Chanakya or Kautilya in 325 B. C. He laid the foundation for the illustrious Maurya dynasty.

## 4. PERSIAN INVASION

The sixth century B.C. was important in three respects. It witnessed the rise of Jainism and Buddhism, the ascendancy of Magadha and the Persian Invasion of India. From time immemorial Iran or Persia had commercial contact with India. The commercial contact in due course developed into political domination in the 6th century B. C. The political condition of North-West India offered a fertile ground for the foreigners to fish in troubled waters. "While the interior of India had been undergoing a process of political unification under Magadha, her undefended and insecure frontiers on the north-west invited foreign invasions".

Cyrus the Great (558-530 B.C.), the founder of the Achaemenian empire of Persia, conquered Gandhara. As Cambyses (530-522 B.C.,) the successors of Cyrus, was preoccupied with the conquest of Egypt, he found no time to divert his attention to India. His successor Darius I (522-486 B.C.) annexed the Punjab and Sind. These two regions constituted the 20th Satraphy of the Persian empire. During the rule of his successor, Xerxes (486-465 B.C.), Greece invaded Persia. The resounding victory of Greece over Persia prevented the latter from following a forward policy in India. It seems quite probable that Persian hold on India was lost during the reign of Artaxerxes II (405-358 B.C.) and never lasted till 330 B. C. when Darius III, the last King of Achaemenian empire died.

### Effects of the Persian Invasion

The Persian Invasion of India was not without its results. The Macedonian Invasion of India came in its wake. It gave a boost to Indo-Iranian commerce. The introduction of the Kharoshthi script may be traced to the Achaemenian domination. The Maurya art was influenced on a modest scale by the Persian influence. Some Persian ceremonials crept into the Maurya Court.

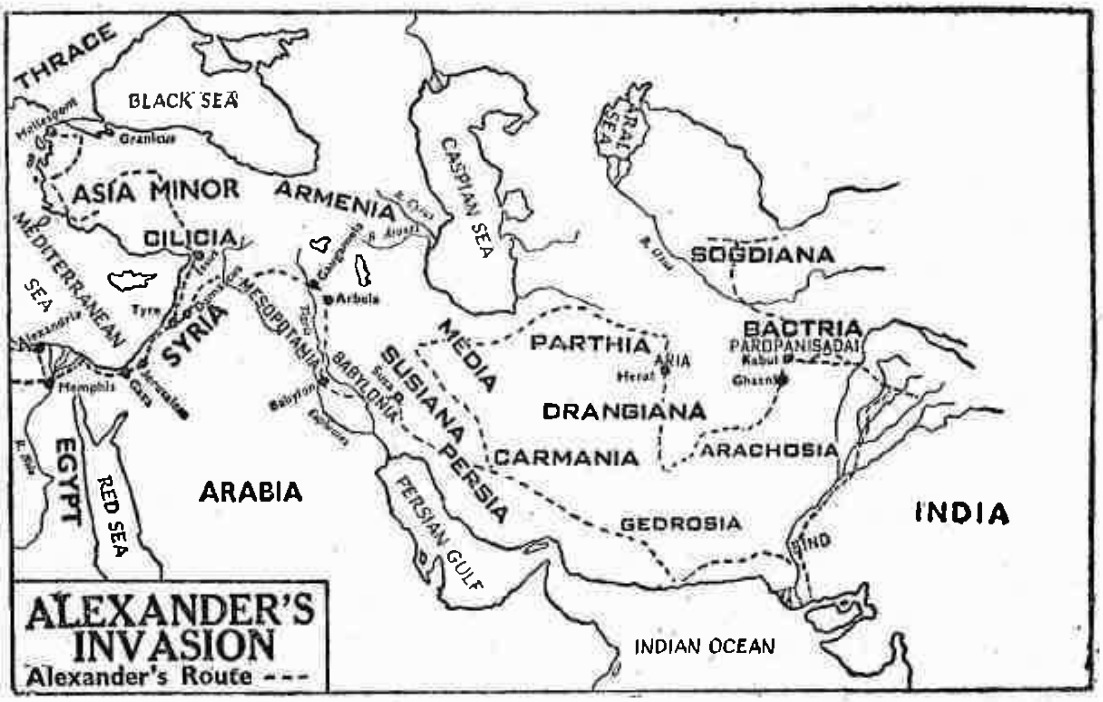
## 5. MACEDONIAN INVASION

Macedonia was a small kingdom situated to the north of Greece. The two important city-states in Greece were Athens and Sparta. The imperial ambitions of Athens were shattered by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.). The fall of Athens left Sparta once again supreme in the Greek world for sometime. It was followed by the Theban supremacy from 370 to 362 B.C. The Theban supremacy was replaced by the Macedonian supremacy under Philip II. Alexander was born to Philip II in 356 B.C. He conquered a number of kingdoms in Asia within a short span of 13 years.

### Conquest of the Persian Empire and Central Asia

Entrusting the government of Macedonia into the hands of Antipater, his fathers's trusted minister, Alexander launched into a career of conquest. He crossed the Hellespont and invaded Asia Minor. In the battle of Granicus River (334 B.C.), he won a resounding victory over the Persians. Then he defeated the Persian King Darius II in the battle of Issus (333 B.C.). The victory at Issus practically brought the whole of Asia Minor under his control; it opened new vistas for the conquest of Syria and Egypt. The fall of Tyre brought the whole of

Syria under his control. From Syria, he marched into Egypt. The Persian Satrap surrendered. The victorious army entered Memphis and Alexander assumed the title of Pharaoh Egypt. At the mouth of the river Nile, he laid the foundation of the great harbour city of Alexandria. From Egypt, Alexander marched through Syria, crossed the rivers Euphrates and Tigris and defeated Darius III at Arbela in 331 B. C. Darius fled from the battle-field. He was murdered by Bessus, the Satrap of Bactria in 330 B. C. Alexander became the undisputed master of the whole of Persia. He married Statira, the daughter of Darius III. The comparative ease with which he humbled the Persian

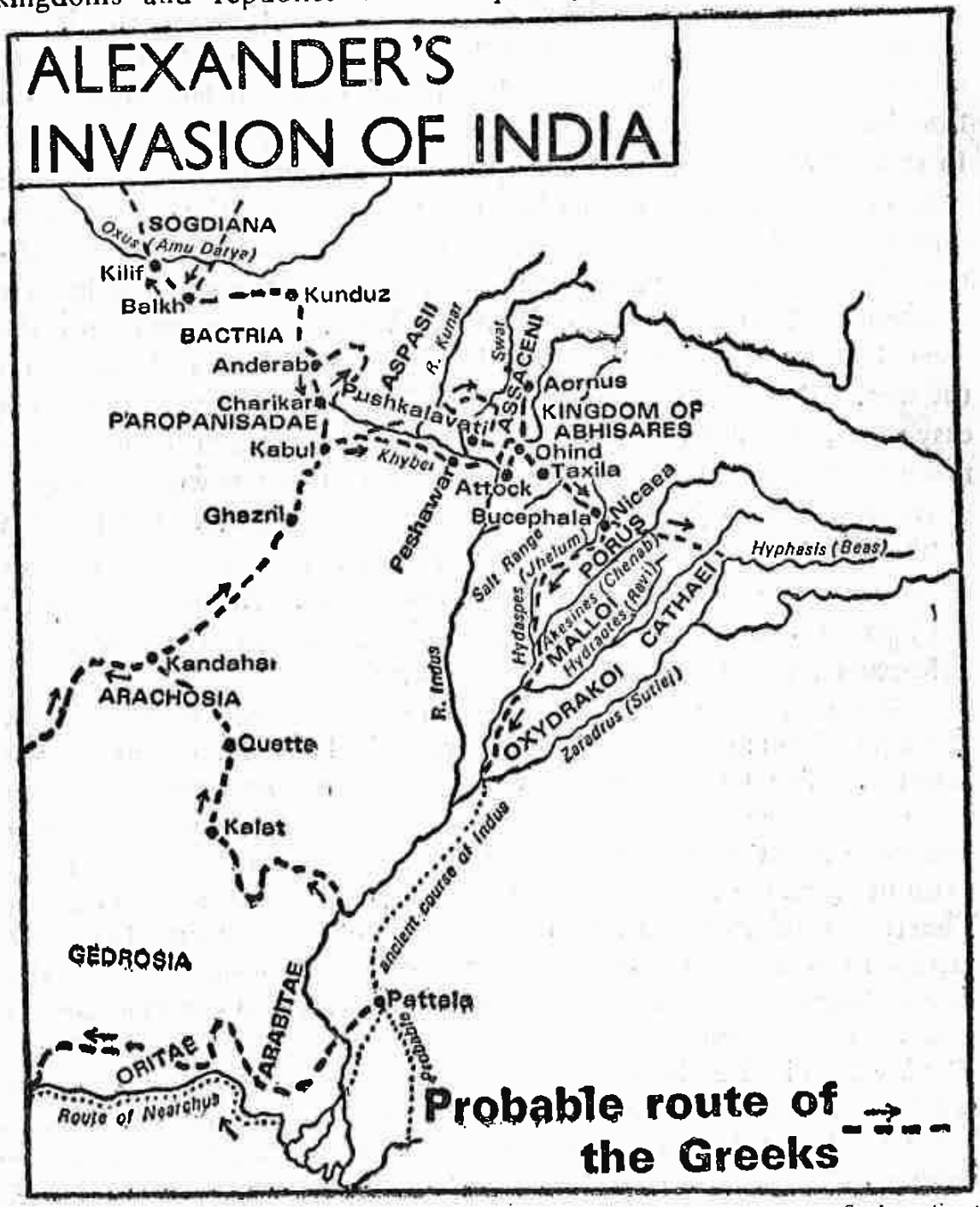



Emperor turned his head. He then cherished the bold design of fresh pastures. He marched his army into Central Asia and conquered Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Gedrosia, Drangiana and Arachosia.

## Conquest of India

As heir to Darius III, Alexander decided to regain the Satraphy of the Persian Emperor in India. The political condition of north-western India and the Punjab presented a confused picture on the eve of Alexander's invasion. There was no unity among the rulers of north-western India. The important Kings of this region were Ambi of Taxila, the ruler of Abhisara in the Swat valley, Purushothama (Porus), the ruler of the land between the Jhelum and the Chenab, Mousikanos, the ruler of Sind, and Sophytes, the ruler of the Salt Range. The state of Nysa situated between the Kunar and Swat valleys had a republican form of government. The other republican

tribes were the Malavas or Malloi who lived in the valley of the Ravi, the Abastanoi or Ambashtha in the Lower Chenab, the Oxdrakoi or the Kshudraka who lived between the Ravi and Beas, and the Siboi who lived below the confluence of the Jhelum and the Chenab. These kingdoms and republics were frequently engaged at war with one




another Even though there was no recognised leader of the first order, Porus was making a bold bid for political supremacy in the region. To conquer the mushroom of warring kingdoms and warlike tribes was an uphill task indeed.

Alexander crossed the Hindukush in 327 B. C. and brought to senses the wild tribes of the Swat and Bajaur valleys. He crossed the Indus in 327 B. C. and reached Taxila where Ambi gave him a warm welcome with rich presents. Thus Alexander got a base in Taxila for his future operations in India. From Taxila, Alexander marched eastwards anb reached the banks of the river Jhelum (Hydaspes). Porus, the ruler of the land between the Jhelum and the Chenab was a man of different stamp, unlike Ambi. He put up a stiff resistance against the Emathian conqueror (the plain of Emathia was a part of Macedonia). In spite of the gallant resistance put up by Porus, he was defeated by Alexander in the battle of the Jhelum or Hydaspes. Porus was taken captive. The fallen foe was treated with great magnanimity by Alexander. He not only restored to him his kingdom but extended it by new additions. After the battle of Jhelum, Alexander advanced upto the river Beas (Hyphasis) bringing under subjection the warlike tribes on the way. Though the conquest of the Gangetic valley was within his easy reach, his soldiers mutinied and refused to proceed further. After making arrangements for the administration of the newly conquered territories, Alexander ordered for the retreat of the army. He left India in 325 B. C. with a part of his army through Gedrosia. The rest of the army left by sea under his admiral Nearchus. Alexander reached Babylon where he died in 323 B. C. in the 33rd year of his age.

## Effects of the Macedonian Invasion

The temporary subjection of some of the warlike tribes and shedding of much innocent blood were the only direct results of the invasion. The defeat of Porus was no great victory because he was not a great ruler. Had Alexander defeated Dhana-Nanda, it would have gone down in history as a signal victory. Immediately after the death of Alexander, all traces of Greek rule were wiped out from India The triumph of Alexander ultimately proved to be as ephemeral as a dew "Even in military science Indians showed no disposition to learn the lessons taught by the sharp sword of Alexander". But the Macedonian invasion was not without its indirect, commercial and cultural effects. The invasion indirectly paved the way for the political unification of north-western India under the Mauryas. The hammering blows given by Alexander to the small states and republics of the punjab made the work of Chandragupta Maurya in extending the sway of Magadhan hegemony to the Punjab lighter. On the cultural side, the Hellenistic influence could be found in the Indian system of coinage and art in a subsequent period. The opening of new trade routes gave a fillip to commerce between India and the western world.

CHAPTER III

# THE MAURYA EMPIRE

## 1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Chandragupta Maurya laid the foundation of the illustrious Maurya dynasty with the assistance of Chanakya or Kautilya. The Maurya period marks a new epoch in the history of India. In the words of Vincent Smith: "The advent of Mauryan period marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian. Chronology suddenly becomes definite, almost precise; a huge empire springs into existence, unifying the innumerable fragments of distracted India...the affairs of secluded India are brought into close touch with those of the outer world". A regular and continuous growth in the political history of India begins with the Maurya dynasty. For the first time in the history of India, a major portion of India was brought under the sway of one central authority. The sources of information for the study of the Maurya period are the Puranas, the sacred literature of the Buddhists and Jains, the Ceylonese Chronicles—Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa—the Girnar Inscription of Rudradaman, the Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Indika of Megasthenes, the Mudra-Rakshasa of Visakhadatta, the Inscriptions of Asoka and the testimony of Greek and Latin writers.

The Puranas furnish a brief account of the early life of Chandragupta Maurya and assign him a regnal period of 24 years. The Buddhist and the Jain traditions and the Ceylonese Chronicles supply scrappy information about the Mauryas. The Buddhist tradition gives a more probable date (324 B.C.) for the accession of Chandragupta Maurya. The Jain tradition throws a flood of light on the closing years of Chandragupta Maurya. The Ceylonese Chronicles—Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa—give a brief account of the reign of Chandragupta Maurya in general and Asoka in particular. The Girnar Rock Inscription of Rudradaman gives a clear picture of the extent of Chandragupta's empire. Apart from these minor sources of information, the main sources are the Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Indika of Megasthenes, the Mudra-Rakshasa of Visakhadatta and the Inscriptions of Asoka.

The Arthasastra—a treatise on statecraft—written by Kautilya is

an invaluable source of information for the study of the Maurya period. Though doubts are raised as regards the authorship of the Arthasastra, it is proved beyond doubt that Chanakya or Kautilya was the author of that celebrated work. It contains a mine-house of information about the political, social, economic and religious conditions during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. In the words of Winternitz: "It is a unique work in the whole range of Indian literature".

The Indika of Megasthenes is also a valuable source of information. Megasthenes was the ambassador sent by Seleukos to the court of Chandragupta. The Indika is available only in fragments. Though he narrates incredible things like gold-digging ants, mouthless and noseless men and people with their feet turned backwards, the importance of the Indika cannot be undermined. It corroborates the accounts of the Arthasastra. Further, it gives a detailed account of the personal life of the King, the capital city Pataliputra and the Maurya system of administration.

The Mudra-Rakshasa of Visakhadatta—a drama assigned to the 5th century A. D.—is another source of information of the Maurya period. In many respects, the drama is in agreement with the facts supplied in the Arthasastra. It gives an account of the overthrow of the unpopular rule of the Nandas by Chandragupta and Kautilya Further, the drama furnishes an account of the Maurya system of administration and the economic, social and religious conditions of the people.

The Inscriptions of Asoka form the mainstay of information for the study of Asoka. The testimony of Greek and Roman writers throw a flood of light on the relations of Chandragupta with Alexander and Seleukos. The discovery of the Greek name Sandrocottus as corresponding to Chandragupta has unravelled many mysteries surrounding the period in question.

## 2. CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA (324–300 B. C.)

### Early Life

In the words of Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerjee: "Much romance has gathered round the origin and early life of Chandragupta Maurya, because so little is known of him. Legend grows in obscurity. It is fond of making hero of a man who rises to greatness from lowly origin". The origin and early life of Chandragupta is shrouded in obscurity. The Puranas consider him as a man of low origin. Accor-

ding to the Puranas, Mura, the mother of Chandragupta was probably the wife of a Nanda King. Justin, the Greek writer, also points out the base origin of Chandragupta Jain tradition considers him as the son of a village headman's daughter who grew up amidst peacock-tamers, herdsmen and hunters. By way of explanation, the Jain tradition points out that the title 'Maurya' derived by Chandragupta is a corruption of the word '*Mayura*' or peacock. The Buddhist tradition represents him as a Kshatriya belonging to the Moriya clan of Pipphalivana in U. P. When the clan fell into evil days, Chandragupta was forced to put up with the hard knocks in early life. While he was still in his teens, he met Alexander in the Punjab. He offended Alexander by a bold speech. When Alexander issued orders to kill him, he fled for his life towards the Vindhya forests.

## Conquests of Chandragupta

### Overthrow of the Greek rule

It was in the Vindhyas that Chandragupta met the astute Brahmin Chanakya who had been offended by the Nanda King. Both Chandragupta and Chanakya schemed together and raised a strong force. The task which Chandragupta had to face was two-fold. The first one was to free the country from foreign yoke and the second, to get rid of the unpopular rule of the Nandas. Immediately after the withdrawal of Alexander from India in 325 B.C., the greatest confusion prevailed in the territories overrun by the Macedonians in India. Visible signs of aversion against foreign rule started even in 326 B. C. Philippos, the Satrap of the Western Punjab, who was appointed by Alexander was murdered in 325 B. C. Alexander met with his death in 323 B. C. After his death, his empire was partitioned twice—in 323 B. C. and in 321 B. C. It is significant that there is no mention in the second partition to any part of India as belonging to the Macedonian empire.

The intervening period between 325 and 323 B. C. was the most crucial and formative period in the career of Chandragupta. He fought with the surviving commanders of Alexander and overthrew the Greek rule in India. But the finishing touch to this mighty task was, however, given only in 317 B. C. when Eudemos, the successor to Philippos, withdrew from the scene. Chandragupta became the undisputed master of the Punjab and Sind and he liberated the country from foreign rule. The Greek writer Justin says: "India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his governors to death. The author of this liberation was Sandrocottus".

(Sandrocottus is the Greek name for Chandragupta).

**Overthrow of the Nanda Rule**

Even before putting an end to the Macedonian rule in India lock, stock and barrel, Chandragupta had to get rid of the unpopular rule of the Nandas. With the help of Chanakya, he started operations. His first attempt which was focussed towards the heart of the country failed. But in the subsequent attempt, he started from the frontiers and it was crowned with success. He defeated and killed Dhana-Nanda. The sovereignty of Pataliputra passed from the Nandas to the Mauryas. If Buddhist tradition is to be believed, Chandragupta ascended the throne in 324 B. C. But the Jain date for his accession is 313 B. C. and the Puranic date 318 or 322 B. C.

**War with Seleukos**

Seleukos surnamed Nikator or conqueror was one of the generals of Alexander. After the death of Alexander, he made himself the master of the eastern part of his empire. He cherished designs to regain the lost satraphy in India. With this end in view, he crossed the Indus in 305 B. C. He was defeated by Chandragupta and had to purchase peace at a huge cost. He surrendered to Chandragupta Aria, Arachosia and Paropanisadai (the capital cities for the respective territories were Herat, Kandahar and Kabul) and also a part of Gedrosia (Baluchistan). In return for the cession of territories, Chandragupta gave 500 war elephants. The treaty was cemented by a matrimonial alliance. Chandragupta married the daughter of Seleukos. But some scholars doubt the authenticity of this fact. After the war, the relations between the two rulers remained cordial. Seleukos sent his envoy Megasthenes to the court of Chandragupta.

**Conquest of Western India and the Deccan**

If the Girnar Rock Inscription of Rudradaman were to be believed, then Chandragupta conquered Saurashtra in Western India. It is with his conquest of the Deccan that scholars widely differ. While some scholars hold the view that it was Chandragupta who conquered the Deccan, there are others who hold that it was done by Bindusara and still others credit the Nandas with that task. But from available facts there is no conclusive evidence to prove that Chandragupta effected the conquest of the Deccan.

**Extent of the Empire**

The Empire of Chandragupta comprised practically the whole of

North India except Kashmir and Kalinga. The conquest of Kalinga was effected by his grandson Asoka. In the south, his empire did not extend beyond the Narbada. On the eastern side, Bengal was also included in his empire. On the western side, it included modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

### Last days of Chandragupta

According to Jain tradition, Chandragupta abdicated the throne in favour of his son Bindusara. The reason behind the alleged abdication was the outbreak of a terrible famine in North India which raged in all its fury for 12 years. He accompanied the Jain monk Bhadrabahu to Sravana Belgola in Mysore and there he is reported to have died of slow starvation.

### Estimate

Chandragupta started his life from a scratch. His rise from obscurity to empyrean heights is a romance in the history of India. He was a great lover of art and literature. He was not only a great conqueror but also a great administrator. An imperialist and expansionist by instinct, he carved out a big empire. He shook off the foreign yoke, put an end to the tyranny of the Nandas and humbled Seleukos. All these were no mean achievements. Chandragupta deserves to be ranked as one of the most successful and greatest sovereigns of Ancient India.

## 3. BINDUSARA (300-273 B. C.)

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. Very little is known about his reign. The Greek writers called him *Amitraghata* or slayer of foes. Taranatha, the Tibetan historian on Buddhism, credit him with the conquest of 16 kingdoms in the south with the help of Chanakya. So it seems quite probable that it was Bindusara who effected the conquest of the Deccan and not his father. He held the vast empire of Chandragupta intact. He also embarked on a career of conquest. He suppressed a revolt in Taxila. He maintained cordial relations with the rulers of Egypt and Syria Ptolemy II of Egypt sent Dionysius as ambassador to Pataliputra. Antiochos of Syria who succeeded Seleukos sent Deimachos as his representative. He replaced Megasthenes at Pataliputra.

## 4. ASOKA (273–236 B. C.)

### Early life and accession

The reign of Asoka forms one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of India. He is the greatest King of the Maurya dynasty. He

was the grandson of Chandragupta and the second son of Bindusara. His inscriptions, the Ceylonese Chronicles—Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa—and Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain traditions are the main sources of information for his reign. He served his father as Viceroy of Taxila and Ujjain. It was at Ujjain that he married Mahadevi. The offsprings of the union were Mahendra (son) and Sangamitra (daughter) Asoka quelled the rebellions in Ujjain and Taxila. The inscriptions throw very little light on his early life. The Buddhist and Ceylonese chronicles are the only sources of information for his early life. The Ceylonese chronicles depict Asoka as a cruel and ferocious tyrant who came to power after killing his 99 brothers and thereby earned the notorious title 'Chandasoka'. The story cannot be accepted as an historical fact because it was mainly intended to glorify Buddhism by drawing a glaring contrast between the warlike career of Asoka in the beginning and the path of peace followed by him after his conversion to Buddhism. Though Asoka came to power in 273 B. C., his coronation took place only four years after his assumption of power. The intervening period between his assumption of power and coronation might have been a trying one for him. During this period, he engaged himself in the fratricidal feud. But there is no conclusive evidence to prove the fact that a war of succession ensued after his father's death and that he killed his 99 brothers including his eldest brother Susima. But he spared the life of his last brother, Tishya. Anyhow, the first four years of Asoka's reign form "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history".

## Kalinga war

Like his illustrious grandfather Chandragupta, Asoka also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. During the ninth year after his coronation, he effected the conquest of Kalinga. Rock Edict XIII gives a graphic account of the horrors and terrors of the Kalinga war and its results. It reads as follows: "one hundred and fifty thousand persons were carried away captive, one hundred thousand were slain and many times that number perished". Kalinga was incorporated with the dominions of the Maurya empire. Asoka was struck with sorrow at the horror and bloodshed caused during the war. The Kalinga war was a turning point in his life. Immediately after the war he was converted to Buddhism by Upagupta. He renounced war once for all and decided to conquer the world by the arts of peace, rather than by the feats of war.

## Extent of the Empire

The Inscriptions of Asoka, spread over the length and breadth of the country, give a clue to the extent of his empire. In the north-west frontier, the territories ceded by Seleukos to Chandragupta remained unaltered. Kalhana's Rajatarangini testifies to the fact that Kashmir was a part of his empire. From the Rummindei Pillar Inscription, we are given to understand that the Nepalese Tarai was a part of the empire. The Stupas of Asoka erected in different parts of Bengal testify to the inclusion of Bengal as an imperial territory. Rock Edict II mentions the independent kingdoms of the Cholas, Pandyas, Keralaputra (Cheras) and Satyaputra. From that we are able to glean that Chittaldurg district in Mysore marked the southernmost limit of his empire.

## Asoka as an administrator

Asoka was a brilliant administrator. There was a high degree of centralisation. The King was the pivot of the administrative machinery. He was assisted by a Council of Ministers in the day-to-day administration of the country. Though the king had great powers, he never acted as a despot. The state under Asoka was a "Welfare State" and not a "Police State".The following quotation clearly proves Asoka's welfare conception. "In the welfare of his subjects lies his welfare; in their happiness his happiness; whatever pleases himself, he shall not consider as good; but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good". For the sake of administrative convenience, Asoka divided the country into five provinces. The capitals of the five provinces were Taxila, Ujjain, Suvarnagiri, Tosali and Pataliputra. Kalinga with its capital at Tosali was created during the reign of Asoka. Judicial administration was very severe. But Asoka made the punishments lighter. A standing army was kept and it was divided into four divisions consisting of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. The spy system was very efficient which kept the King informed about the day-to-day happenings in nook and corner of the empire. The city of Pataliputra was administered by a council consisting of 30 members divided into six committees of five members each. Each committee looked after a particular business.

An important change introduced by Asoka in the administration was the appointment of a new class of officers known as *Dhamma Mahamatras* (*Dharma Mahamatras*) for the establishment and promotion of the Dharma or Law of Piety and the happiness of those devoted to Dharma. An equally important change was that he instituted

quinquennial and triennial tours of high officers like *Pradesikas*, *Rajukas*, *Yutas* and *Mahamatras*. In addition to their usual duties of inspection, they were expected to spread the message of the Dhamma or Dharma in such a way as to reach the remotest parts of the Empire.

## Asoka as a patron of art and letters

Asoka was a great builder. He substituted stone for wood and brick He built a palace at Pataliputra, the capital of the Imperial Mauryas. Tradition credits Asoka with the construction of 84,000 stupas or viharas. The artistic excellence of the period is also reflected in the rock-cut caves and the monolithic pillars. He constructed the Sudarsana reservoir near Girnar for irrigational purposes. Public education received a great stimulus during his period.

## Inscriptions of Asoka

Asoka is mentioned in the inscriptions as Devanampiya (Beloved of the Gods) or Priyadarsi (Of Amiable appearance). His name is mentioned only in the Maski Edict. The language used in the inscriptions is Prakrit and the script Brahmi. In two inscriptions, the Kharoshthi script is used. The inscriptions located throughout the country fall under three divisions. They are the Rock Inscriptions, the Pillar Inscriptions and Cave Inscriptions. These three can be again sub-divided into eight divisions in chronological order.

### 1. Two types of Minor Rock Edicts

The first type of Minor Rock Edicts deals with the personal life of Asoka. The second type lists the sacred principles of Dhamma or Law of Piety. The Maski Minor Rock Edict unique by itself is the only one which mentions the personal name of the King.

### 2. Bhabru Rock Edict

The Bhabru Rock Edict proves beyond doubt that the personal religion of Asoka was Buddhism.

### 3. The fourteen Rock Edicts

The fourteen Rock Edicts located in different places mention Asoka's principles of government and ethical system.

### 4. The Kalinga Rock Edicts

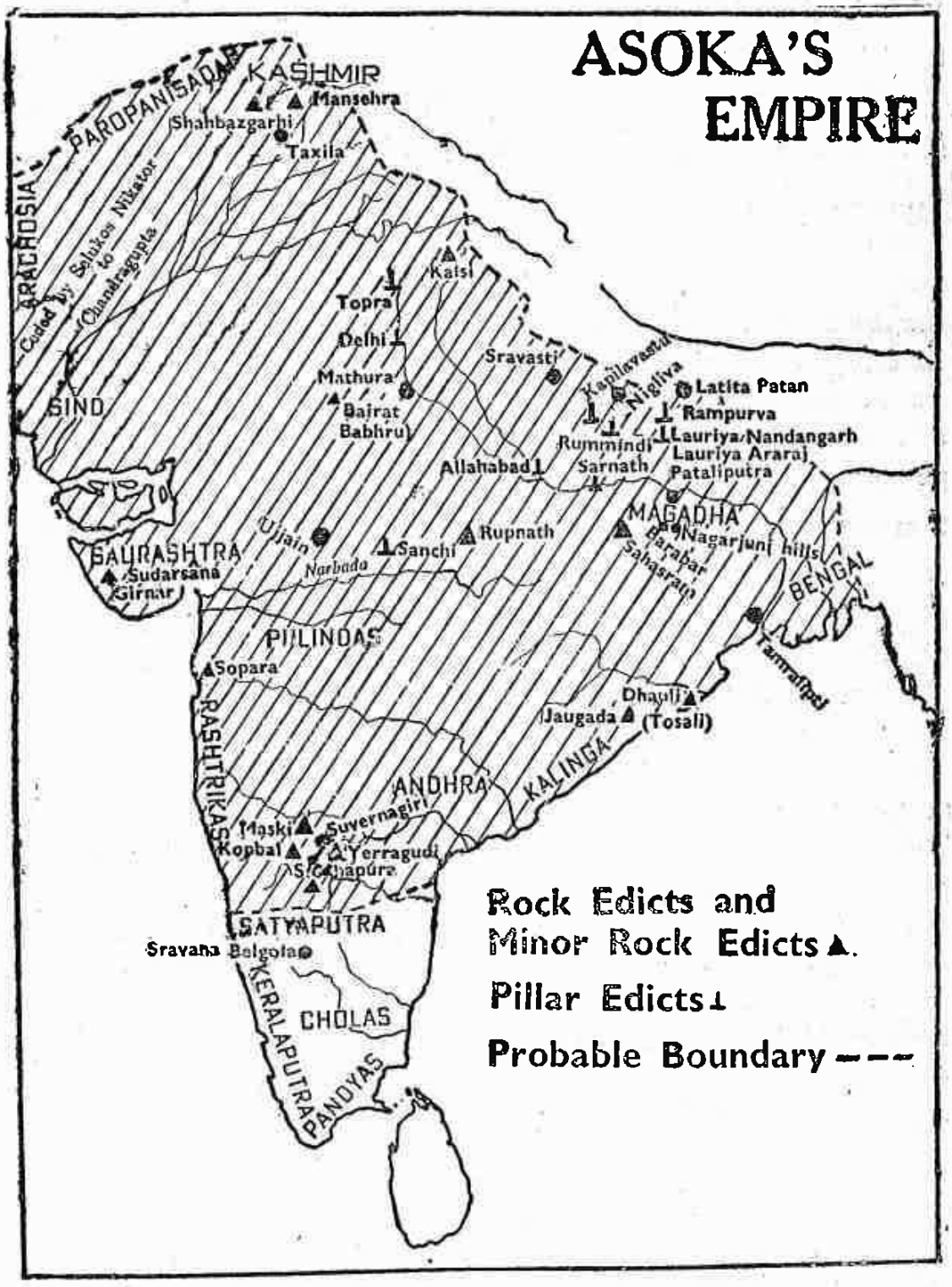
The two Kalinga Rock Edicts deal with the method of administration to be followed in the newly conquered province of Kalinga.

### 5. The three Cave Inscriptions in the Barabar Hills

These caves dedicated by Asoka to Ajivikas (Jain Monks) speak volumes of his religious toleration.

## 6. The two Tarai Pillar Inscriptions

These two Pillar Inscriptions which are of a commemorative nat-




ure prove that Asoka went on Dharmayatras to holy places connected with the life of the Buddha.

### 7. The seven Pillar Edicts

The seven Pillar Edicts deal with the Dhamma and the steps taken by Asoka for the propagation of Dhamma.

### 8. The four Minor Pillar Edicts

These inscriptions mention the punishments to be meted out to schismatics in the Buddhist Church.

## Historical importance of the Inscriptions

The inscriptions are an invaluable source of information for the reign of Asoka. They help us to know the extent of his empire, the accurate regnal periods of his contemporaries in Syria, Egypt, Macedon, *etc.*, about his Dhamma, the steps taken by him to propagate Buddhism abroad, his administrative system, high percentage of literacy, the culture of the people and above all his character and personality.

## Services to Buddhism

Asoka was the greatest benefactor of Buddhism. He rendered glorious and meritorious services to Buddhism. He undertook many effective steps to spread Buddhism in nook and corner of the country. He introduced Buddhist principles in the government of the country. He removed some of the harsh features in judicial administration. The punishments were made light and more humane. Asoka himself set an example as to how people should lead a Buddhistic way of life. The greatness of Asoka lies in the fact that he practised what he preached. He gave up war once for all and the *Bherighosha* was replaced by the *Dharmaghosha*. He abolished royal hunts. The *Viharayatras* or pleasure trips were substituted by *Dharmayatras*. Meat-eating was prohibited in the royal kitchen. He appointed religious officers called *Dharma Mahamatras* to propagate the new faith. He gave wide publicity to Buddhism by engraving the Buudhist precepts on rocks and pillars which lay scattered in different parts of the country.

According to tradition, Asoka convened a Buddhist Council at Pataliputra to settle the disputes among the monks and to compile the scriptures. But with all his faith in Buddhism, Asoka was not intolerant of other creeds. He showered gifts on Buddhists as well as Brahmins and Jains He undertook many works of public utility. The most important work of Asoka was the construction of hospitals for people and beasts.

Buddhism flourished in India due to the royal patronage extended to it by Asoka. He began to spread Buddhism to countries outside his own empire. Missionaries were sent to Ceylon, Egypt, Macedonia, Syria and a number of other places. Of all the missions, the one that was sent to Ceylon was crowned with splendid success He sent his own son and daughter—Mahendra and Sangamitra. They converted Devanampiya-Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon, to the Buddhist faith. Sangamitra took along with her a branch of the Bo-tree under which Buddha got enlightenment and transplanted it at Aniruddhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon. That tree still stands as the oldest historical tree in Ceylon. Perhaps, the greatest contribution made by Asoka to Buddhism was that he raised a local religion from the neglect into which it had fallen to the status of a world religion. He left no stone unturned to make Buddhism a world religion. There is a controversy about the personal religion of Asoka. While some scholars say that he was not a Buddhist, others consider him a Brahminical Hindu. But the Bhabru Edict proves beyond doubt that the personal religion of Asoka was Buddhism.

## Estimate

Asoka is one of the greatest Kings of history. He made no difference between precept and practice. He practised what he preached. His title to fame rests on his religious catholicity and his high sense of duty to the people. As Koppen says in the Encyclopaedia Brittanica: "If a man's fame can be measured by the number of hearts who revere his memory, by the number of lips who have mentioned and still mention him with honour, Asoka is more famous than Charlemagne or Caesar". Asoka has been compared with Alexander, Caesar, Constantine and Napoleon. Asoka was more than all these people and in actual achievement, he outdistanced all of them. His cosmopolitan and humanitarian ideals speak volumes of his greatness and mightiness. "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the cloumns of history, their majesties and graciousness and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne".

# 5. THE MAURYA SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

## Sources of information

The main sources of information for the study of the Maurya system of administration are the 'Arthasastra' of Kautilya, the 'Indika' of Megasthenes, the Inscriptions of Asoka and the 'Mudra-Rakshasa' of Visakhadatta.

## Central Government

The system of administration adopted by the Mauryas was neither untempered autocracy nor undiluted despotism. The King occupied the foremost place in the administrative machinery. He wielded legislative, executive and judicial powers. Though he wielded great powers, he never behaved like a despot. The Maurya State was a 'Welfare State' and not a 'Police State'. The Arthasastra says: "In the happiness of his subjects lies his [the King's] happiness, in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good". The King strained every nerve to promote the material and moral welfare of the people. The Edicts of Asoka reveal the fact that the King considered himself as the servant of the people. The King was a law-abiding monarch. The law was above the King and not the King above the law. His orders amounted to proclamations explaining existing laws. Whenever the King misbehaved, the people had every right to depose him and put another in his stead.

The King worked hard according to a very heavy time-table. He had to dispense justice, hear the report of the spies, receive ministers, check revenue accounts, attend to correspondence, inspect the army and spend some time in amusements. An amazonian bodyguard of armed women protected the person of the King. In the day-to-day administration of the country, he was assisted by an inner circle of *Mantrins* or Ministers consisting of the Prime Minister, the Purohita, the Senapati and the Yuvaraja, and an outer circle of ministers consisting of the *Mantri-parishad, Amatyas* and *Adhyakshas*. The outer circle of *Mantrins* consisted of people noted for their wisdom and justice. These *Mantrins* probably correspond to the *Mahamatras* of Asoka. The King chiefly relied on the inner circle of *Mantrins* for assistance and guidance. The *Mantri parishad* which occupied a lower rank was not consulted by the King on all occasions. But in times of emergency, he was bound by the decision of the majority of the *Mantri-parishad.*

The *Amatyas* discharged judicial and administrative functions. The *Adhyakshas* headed the various departments.

The government discharged constituent and ministrant functions. The constituent or the most elementary functions were to protect the country from external danger and internal threats and to maintain peace and order in the country. The ministrant functions were to look after the various problems like trade, industry, hospitals, roads, arts, *etc.* The Maurya government also discharged some welfare functions. It extended relief to the aged, orphans, widows and the disabled. In the time of Asoka, the administrative machinery was geared to discharge religious duties also.

## Revenue administration

The main source of income for the government came from the tax on land. The share of the state was fixed at 1/6th of the gross produce. Sometimes it was raised to $\frac{1}{4}$th and in a special case it was reduced to $\frac{1}{8}$th for the Lumbini village in honour of the Buddha's birth in that village. Public revenue flowed from other sources as well such as tolls, customs, excise, gambling, slaughter-houses, prostitutes, tributes, fines from law-courts, spoils of war, *etc.* To stem the tide of corruption among revenue officials, special intelligence officers were appointed. The main items of public expenditure were the amount spent for defence maintenance of the royal household, poor relief, public works, religion *etc.*

## Justice

The King was the fountain of justice. He was the highest court of appeal. Apart from the King's court, there were other courts to decide both civil and criminal cases. In the Maurya days, punishments were very severe. Fines, flogging, mutilation, torture and death were the usual punishments. Though Asoka reduced the severity in the punishments, he did not abolish capital punishment. Both the provinces and the districts had a number of local courts. The *Gramikas* decided petty cases in the villages.

## Army

It goes to the credit of the Mauryas for organising a standing army. Even the Mughals who came at a far later period did not possess a standing army. The Maurya army consisted of the traditional four divisions of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. Apart from the four main divisions, the Navy and the Commissariat and transport departments constituted two main divisions in the army. The army of

Chandragupta consisted of 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants, and a good number of chariots. The administration of the military, naval and the Commissariat and transport departments was put under the charge of a commission of 30 members divided into six committees of five members each. The first board looked after the navy, the second the Commissariat and transport, the third the infantry, the fourth the cavalry, the fifth the chariots and the sixth the elephant corps.

## Espionage

The spy system was organised on efficient lines. The spies kept a close watch on the working of the administration of the provinces. The two groups of spies—stationary and wandering—kept the King well-informed about the day-to-day happenings in the key centres and nook and corner of the empire.

## Provincial administration

For the sake of administrative convenience, the empire was divided into provinces and the provinces into districts called *Aharas* or *Vishayas*. The number of provinces during the time of Chandragupta is not known. During the time of Asoka, there were five provinces. The provinces were governed by Viceroys who were usually the princes. They were called *Kumaras* or *Aryaputras*. The Edicts of Asoka mention four *Kumaras* ruling over four provinces with capitals at Taxila, Ujjain, Suvarnagiri and Tosali The home province with headquarters at Pataliputra was under the direct control of the King. Sometimes a province was under the control of a Governor known as *Pradesika*. The Girnar (Junagarh) Inscription of Rudradaman mentions the names of two such provincial governors of Saurashtra. The *Rajukas*, *Yutas* and *Mahamatras* served under the Governor. The lowest unit of administration was the village or *Grama* headed by a *Gramani*. A *Gopa* was in charge of five to ten villages. The *Aharas* or districts were under the control of *Pradesikas*.

## Changes introduced by Asoka

An important change introduced by Asoka in the administration was the appointment of a new class of officers known as *Dharma Mahamatras* for the establishment of the Dharma or Law of Piety and the happiness of those devoted to Dharma. An equally important change was that he instituted quinquennial and triennial tours of high officers like *Pradesikas*, *Rajukas*, *Yutas* and *Mahamatras*. In addition to their usual duties of inspection, they were expected to spread the

message of the Dhamma or Dharma in such a way as to reach the remotest parts of the empire.

## City administration

The capital city of Pataliputra was laid out on a well-defined plan. It was located on the confluence of the Ganges and Son. It was nine miles in length with the river in the front and a mile and a half in breadth. The city was protected by wooden walls which had 64 gates and 574 towers. The walls of the city were surrounded by a deep moat filled with water from the river. The palace of the King was in th centre of the city. It was beautified and adorned with fountains, fish ponds, ornamental designs and costly decorations. The 'Indika' of Megasthenes gives an account of the administration of Pataliputra. The city of Pataliputra was governed by a municipal commission of 30 members divided into six boards of five members each. Each board looked after a particular business. The first board controlled the industries and handicrafts. The second was concerned with travellers and foreign visitors. The third registered births and deaths. The fourth regulated sales and produce, weights and measures. The fifth was in charge of manufactures. The sixth was in charge of the collection of sales taxes. The municipal commission collectively made provision for comforts and conveniences of the people by making sanitary arrangements, providing water supply, maintaining public buildings and safeguarding fruit and flower gardens.

## Census

A novel feature of the Maurya system of administration was that a census was taken every year. It was with political and economic motives that the census was taken. It was undertaken to properly assess the material condition of the people, their tax potential and the movements of the people including foreign visitors. The village officials recorded the details of the census in the villages and the municipal officers in the towns.

## Conclusion

The highlights of the Maurya system of administration were organisation, efficiency, a regular standing army, institution of census, separation of the civil and the military departments, city administration on advanced lines and above all a welfare-oriented administration. The drawbacks were the severity of the punishments, tyranny of the spies, over-centralisation and the low tone and morale prevalent in the administration due to the adoption of the Kautilyan tactics of "end

justifying the means". But when the balance sheet is drawn, the credit side far outweighs the debit side.

## 6. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DURING THE MAURYA PERIOD

### Social Condition

#### Caste

During the Maurya period the caste system began to assume rigidity. The oppressive system in fact led to extreme reaction in the form of Buddhism and Jainism aiming at amelioration of the socially downtrodden. The early practice of division of society on the basis of Varna (literally the colour but indicating the type of mental calibre needed to perform different functions in the society) alongwith inter-caste marriages led to the multiplication of sub-castes within the original four-fold Varna classification. The supremacy of the Brahmana class became an established feature ever since the closing centuries of later Vedic Age. The caste system based on functional difference disappeared in course of time and birth came to be considered as the only criterion for following a particular profession. Elaborate rituals necessitated the establishment and maintenance of a priestly class which appropriated for itself the educational arena also. Though others were not excluded from teaching or learning, gradually learning became a neglected subject for the Sudra class. The Kshatriyas were too busy in preparing for the ordeal of life-long offence and defence and the Vaisyas in the multiplication of wealth. The Brahmana class thus found a virtually monopolistic pursuit in sacred and secular literature.

This exclusive position of the Brahmanas also laid on them severe conditions of life. The Brahmin was to be the epitome of all the virtues and any deviation from the austere responsibilities led to disgrace and disapproval. His primary duties included learning, teaching, performing priestly functions, and offering and accepting gifts His way of life should be unblemished and his actions selfless and exemplary. He occupied a number of important posts in the state like the minister, judge, counsellor, teacher, *etc.* In fact a certain amount of holiness began to be clothed around his person that he was exempt from capital punishment even for the most serious crime committed.

The Kshatriyas, too, dominated the social life on account of their inevitable service to the society. Though they were not excluded from studying sacred literature, practical considerations made them

concentrate on warfare. Their glory lay in enhancing the prestige of the kingdom and the ideal of imperialism constantly goaded them towards bettering weaponary and improve the tactics of warfare. They were concerned with material as well as moral welfare of the people and notwithstanding minor deviations we come across with a host of dedicated Kshatriyas bent upon enriching the state. They, too, were not allowed an unfettered life and should set an example to the society by leading a generally commendable life. They discharged their functions in a spirit of service and dedication. There have been instances of kings flouting or violating established usages but these were only exceptions. The Kings willingly and lovingly took upon themselves the arduous task of protecting the subjects and preserving peace within the state.

The Vaisyas, too, were not excluded from learning secular and sacred literature but the art of business development made it difficult for them to take serious interest in sacred literature. The growth of commercial practices and the extent of possible contacts left enterprising merchant communities busy with expanding their activities. The accident of birth enabled them to have monopoly over commerce but they too were required to use their wealth in a good manner. The affluent ones patronised arts and letters and the daring ones embarked upon schemes of overseas trade. The Vaisya caste was also permitted to care for agriculture and cattle-rearing.

The lot of the Sudra caste became decidedly inferior and unattractive. The study of the Vedas was forbidden long ago and only rarely do we come across his access to the secular literature. The Dharma Sastras degraded his position by making him dependent and subordinate to the other castes. He carried on his life by engaging himself in various crafts and menial work. His position was that of a slave without actually being branded as such. This was a pitiable state of affairs neither warranted by the catholicity of early Vedic outlook nor necessitated by the dictates of the circumstances. Somehow, the functional basis in the origin of the caste was pushed back and stress on birth alone decided the professions one has to follow. The Aryans had only condescendingly admitted indigenous tribes into their fold and this probably contributed to the harsh treatment meted out to a large number of people having the same cultural legacies. This was due to the rigidity in the religious outlook and it rightly

provoked opposition from enlightened thinkers like Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. The caste system, as a curse, began to dominate the Indian social life from the dawn of authentic historical era and its meaningless division of society had done enormous social harm.

## The Four Stages, Joint Family, Slavery

The four stages or orders in an individual's life, *viz.*, Brahmacharin, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa continued to remain as a dominant feature of the society. The Joint family system was another characteristic feature of the society. The authority wielded by the seniormost male member in the family was considerable. The prevalence of the system of polygamy created discord in the family. Slavery was also prevalent during the period.

## Marriage and the position of Women

Though inter-caste marriages were quite common, marriages within the same caste were preferred. Marriage within the same gothra (lineal descendants of common ancestor) was prohibited. The Dharma Sutras refer to eight types of marriages. They are: (1) the Brahma, (2) the Daiva, (3) the Arsha, (4) the Prajapatya, (5) the Gandharva, (6) the Asura, (7) the Rakshasa, and (8) the Paisacha. The Brahma type was the common form of marriage. The bride was offered as a gift to a suitable groom with appropriate presentations. The Daiva form was giving one's daughter in marriage to the priest for having performed a sacrifice. The third type Arsha indicates that the father of the daughter gave the girl after receiving from the bridegroom a cow and a bull or two pairs. In the Prajapatya, there was no gift from either side of the marriage parties. The fifth type of marriage, known as Gandharva, was also in vogue when two people loving each other chose to marry with or without parental consent. The love marriage of this type was not frowned upon and was more common among the Kshatriya class. Many a romance had sprouted and enlivened the pages of literature depicting this type of marriage. The Asura type of marriage was one whereby the bride was purchased by a suitor after giving as much wealth as he could. The seventh, Rakshasa type, was common among the Kshatriyas, who captured brides, took them as captives and forcibly married them. The last one was the Paisacha type whereby the unwilling girl was forced to become the bride through sheer wickedness and violence. The last three types of marriages were not favoured. But in order to legitimise the offsprings, they received social sanction. Kautilya says that the validity of any type of

marriage depends on the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Arsha type of marriage was quite popular with the people during the Maurya period.

Though child marriage had not come into practice, early marriage of girls was advocated to maintain their bodily purity. The custom of *sati* was in vogue. The education of women already under a setback from later Vedic period consequently suffered due to the lowering of the marriageable age. All this brought about a definite lowering in the status and position of women. The final stage in the deterioration was not reached because we come across two types of women pictured in literary works. "In one set of verses in the epics we find women described as fickle, quarrelsome, untruthful—in other words, a veritable pot of poison! She must, therefore, remain (we are told) under control all her life; in girlhood under the guardianship of her father, in youth under the domination of the husband, and in old age in the charge of her sons. In the other set of verses, woman is 'the glory of the home', the symbol of prosperity to the family, (the better) half of the husband, his friend, philosopher and guide, and therefore worthy of all attention and respect".

The growing importance attached to physical chastity led to gradual discouragement of widow remarriage, divorce and levirate and the encouragement of the practice of *sati.* With no education worth the name, with no voice in the selection of the bridegroom, with no inheritance from the father, with no social approval for pursuing an independent life, women became dressed up dolls with no purpose other than playing second fiddle to man's life. It is quite unfortunate that while great honour and praise were showered on puranic heroines, in practical life women became mere chattels. In spite of the handicaps, women were able to inculcate piety and good manners into the minds of their children through the tales of the Ramayana and Mahabharata which were invariably repeated from generation to generation.

The courtesans occupied an honoured place in society. The public women were accomplished in different arts such as dancing, singing, *etc.* There were courtesans with many talents who excited the imagination of the nobility. The practice of maintaining prostitutes out of temple funds also became an established fact. They had to sing or dance in the temples at the prescribed time. In course of time, a caste exclusively devoted to dancing developed. Public women were also brought under the state control by suitable laws protecting their

interests.

## Dress and Ornaments

People wore two garments, the lower one from waist downwards to the knee halfway down to the ankles and the upper one thrown partly over shoulders. In the early stages, there was not much difference between the dress of a man and a woman. "Both used head-dress and ornaments though gradually the women gave up the former and the men the latter". While ascetics dressed themselves in the garments of grass, people wore silk, cotton, linen and wool. Widows wore only white-coloured garments while others dressed themselves up with garments of exotic colours. The arts of dying, weaving and stitching were known and the raiments were gay and colourful. People adorned themselves with jewelleries of all types. The ear-rings, necklaces, waist-bands, bracelets, rings, anklets, *etc* , were freely used. The designs and types were also reflected in the sculpture of the age. Ivory was also used for adorning oneself by very rich people. Womenfolk paid especial attention to hair style, scents, perfumes and garments. Women bedecked themselves with flowers.

## Food Habits

It would appear that rice, barley and wheat were the main dishes. Meat-eating was fairly extensive. Milk and its products were accorded a high value and a number of milk delicacies were common. Fruits, butter, honey and fish were all used in the preparation of a number of side dishes. People did not believe in a starved outlook. The culinary art was well-developed.

Though the prohibition on drinking was enjoined by all the scriptures, practical life was replete with soft drinks and intoxicating potions. The consumption of liquor on a large scale led the state to start its own breweries as is gathered from Kautilya's work. Though the orthodox Brahmin, the ascetic monk and the penurious ones may have denied themselves the pleasures of drink, the habit was assiduously cultivated by the Kshatriyas and the nobility. Festivals were always marked by bouts of drinks. Excessive drinking was always considered an evil and the drunkard was rated very low in the society.

## Dwellings

The people were accustomed to city life as is clear from the Buddhist and Jain records. As the building material was of wood many traces are not left. Cities were encircled by high walls provided with

watch-towers. Deep moats with crocodiles formed further protection. Arrows and other missiles could be hurled at the intruders from the watch-towers. The rectangular or square-shaped cities had the royal palace in the centre. Extensive reference to the municipal administration testify to the various types of functions performed by municipal councils and the due recognition accorded to civil and hygienic conditions of the people. Temples and Viharas were well-kept as is attested by various sacred literature. Tall buildings were not uncommon. Buildings were elegantly constructed but utility was not sacrificed. Brick, stone or wood was used for constructing houses. Living rooms were tastefully decorated. Furniture items of a rich variety were used by the rich. The less fortunate also had furniture items but fabricated out of inferior wood.

## Amusements

There was no lack of amusements for the people. Apart from periodical and regular religious festivities, indoor and outdoor games were also in vogue. Hunting, wrestling, chariot-racing, *etc.*, attracted people towards out-door life. People were not given to morose thinking as the religious prescriptions of the age indicate. There were a number of ball-games, dicing, *etc.* People laid out small gardens on the lawns adjoining their houses. As is popular even now, performing troupes staging dramas gave general entertainment to the people. Though the troupes did not have elaborate settings, the skill in acting accompanied by dancing and music enthralled the audience. These were patronised by the kings and the nobility and the poor flocked to see such performances. The people had well-developed musical sense. Music was well cultivated.

## Conclusion

The people of any society will have a base from which they could weave their cultural pattern. The motif of the cultural life of the people was provided by the pursuit of the Dharma (Religion or spirituality), the Artha (Wealth) and the Kama (Enjoyment). Kautilya says that wealth was indispensable for the fulfilment of the other two. The pursuit of these in a balanced measure would leave the individual satisfied with life. Pursuit of any single norm alone would eventually leave the individual unsatisfied. People believed in worldly enjoyments so long as those did not deter them from higher pursuits. From this view-point one arrives at the manner of living and the ideals and practices of the people. Had the people been indifferent to worldly pursuits

a thousand goods essential for material culture would not have received impetus for growth.

## Economic Condition

The establishment of well-defined kingdoms several hundreds of years before the Mauryan imperialism had gradually changed the economic conditions of the people. Gone were the days of nomadic Aryan tribes in search of fresh pastures The orderly development of agriculture and utilisation of natural resources undoubtedly left a picture of contented rural life. The villages consisting from 30 to 1000 families based their economic life on the strength of agricultural operation. Accordingly well-defined practices came into vogue in village life enhancing the stability and order and promoting peaceful atmosphere. The bountiful land could support a large population and there were enough people to engage themselves exclusively in agriculture and others in different crafts deriving their income through smithery, pottery, *etc.*

The villages had common grazing ground for the cattlehead. Common groves were not uncommon. In the rich Indo-Gangetic plains, the returns from the land were more than proportionate to the toils of the agriculturists. Irrigation was developed as an art. Besides paddy cultivation, many vegetables and fruits were grown. Sugarcane, plantains, mangoes, *etc.*, were well known. The encouragement by the state came in the form of cattle farms, poultry farms, dairy farms, *etc.*, supervised by officials. Even hunting grounds were under the care of proper officials. A large number of graded officials like *Adhyaksha* (Superintendent), *Samkhyayaka* (Accountant), *Gopa* (Animal Welfare Officer), *Sthanika* (Administrative Agent), *Chikitsaka* (Medical Officer), and *Jamghakarika* (Postman) testify to the imperial care and concern over the welfare of villagers. The village administration had on its staff a carpenter, blacksmith, potter, barber, washerman and the like to attend to common work of the village. Each village had its own police force. Tax on agricultural produce ranged from one-sixth to one-twelfth. Special and periodical levies were also imposed upon the cultivators. The forest resources were also carefully utilised and developed.

Handicrafts were well developed. There were skilled carpenters, smiths, painters, stone-cutters, potters, weavers, *etc.* The skill attracted much admiration from the contemporary Greek eye-witness, Megasthenes. The use of chariots necessitated proper knowledge of wood and skill in applying theory into practice. Workshops buzzed with activities. As the finished products in wood, ivory, stone, gold,

and silver were in constant demand throughout, there was no lack of opportunities for the skilled workers to show their creative talents. The kingdoms and capitals rightly depended upon rural prosperity and no wonder the needs of the villages were carefully looked into.

Barter system dominated the economic scene even though money was known and used in a number of transactions. Accordingly regulations were made regarding the loans, and interest, and proper protection of the lender and the borrower.

The trade guilds were a notable feature during the Mauryan period. The professional guilds regulated terms and conditions of different trades and rendered valuable help to the members of the particular trade. The craftsmen also formed guilds and protected their interests. Arthasastra lists governmental steps to watch the activities of the guilds. The guilds had their own chairmen exercising sufficient authority to enforce discipline among its members. Merchants co-operated with each other when cart-loads of goods were to be sent to far-off places or were to be received from distant parts by joint organisation.

Extensive contacts with the outside world also necessitated co-ordination between various merchant-guilds and shipping authorities. Trade relations flourished between India and Greece besides traditional contacts with Ceylon and East Asian countries. Reliable sea-routes, therefore, had been discovered and oceanic travel or transportation was not novel. The Indian stones, pearls, scents, spices, perfumes, silk, muslin, *etc.*, were much sought after.

State regulation on trade and industry aimed at preventing the exploitation of the people. Some control over trade was inevitable in any set-up of society and the careful administrative measures of Mauryan rule reveals the solicitous concern of the kings. The government had monopolies over gold, silver and diamond mines besides ocean wealth such as pearls, conch-shells, *etc.* It set up factories of its own for manufacturing oil, sugar, wines, liquors, *etc.* Coin regulations enabled free availability of coins throughout the state. Prices were determined by the government taking into consideration the difficulties of both the manufacturers and the consumers. Weights and measures were checked and severe punishments were meted out to offenders.

## 7. MAURYA ART

The Maurya art was a class by itself Of course, there was some Iranian and Greek influence. But in the final consummation, the

Maurya art excelled in artistic expression. According to Marshall, the Maurya art was noted for its "massive simplicity, extraordinary precision and accuracy and spirited realism". Asoka preferred sand to brick and wood in the erection of his structures. The magnificent palaces at Pataliputra which were once a matter of awe and inspiration for the Greek and Chinese travellers have perished long ago. The rock-cut Chaitya halls in the Barabar hills with their polished walls is a romance in the field of architecture. It was in the field of sculpture that the Maurya art reached a high degree of perfection. The stupas and the various monolithic pillars reveal a high degree of excellence of the Maurya art. The stupas at Sarnath and Sanchi are the best specimens of the sculpture of the period. In the words of Dr. Smith: "The skill of the stone-cutter may be said to have attained perfection and to have accomplished tasks which would perhaps be found beyond the powers of the 20th century".

## 8 SUCCESSORS OF ASOKA

From available indigenous sources it is very difficult to construct the order in the line of succession to Asoka. The different views are conflicting and do not throw much light on the details of the different regnal periods Among the sons of Asoka, the inscriptions mention only Tivara. But literary sources mention his three sons—Mahendra, Kunala and Jalauka. From the three rock-cut cave inscriptions on the Nagarjuni hills, we are able to know that Dasaratha, a grandson of Asoka was one of his successors. The last King of the Maurya dynasty was Brihadratha. He was killed in broad daylight by his Commander-in-Chief Pushyamitra in 187 B. C. who then laid the foundation of the Sunga dynasty.

## 9. DOWNFALL OF THE MAURYA EMPIRE

### 1. Asoka's Responsibility

Some writers hold the view that Asoka was responsible for the downfall of the Maurya empire. His doctrine of ahimsa and the renunciation of war as a means to conquer places led to the disappearance of the martial spirit in the soldiers. It is true that Asoka abandoned war once for all after the Kalinga war. But he did not disband the army. It was kept on such efficient lines that there was no foreign invasion during his reign. Under his dynamic personality, the doctrine of ahimsa paid rich dividends. So the causes for the disintegration of the empire should be sought elsewhere.

### 2. Over-centralisation and vast extent of the Empire

Over-centralisation was the characteristic feature of the Maurya government. The Emperor combined in his person all powers. With the passage of time, the extent of the empire reached its saturation point. The successors of Asoka were unwilling to share power with the Governors of the provinces. The evils of over-centralisation ate into the very vitals of the empire. Overdose of work brought senselessness at the centre and paralysis at the extremities. Under the weak successors of Asoka, the evils became fully manifest.

### 3. Division of the Empire

After the death of Asoka, his empire was divided among his sons and grandsons. They vied with one another to assert supremacy. The division of the empire provided excellent opportunities for adventurers and opportunists to fish in troubled waters.

### 4. Provincial oppression

When the empire became unwieldy, the emperor was not able to exercise any effective control over the provinces. Misgovernment of the provinces became the order of the day. The tyranny of the provincial Governors and officials led to a number of revolts. During the time of Bindusara, there were two revolts at Ujjain and Taxila. Asoka was sent to quell the revolts. When Asoka went to suppress the revolt at Taxila the people explained: "We are not opposed to the prince nor even the King Bindusara, but only the wicked ministers who insult us". As the Emperor was always haunted by the menace of the provincial revolts and the shadow of the domestic traitor, he was not able to fully exert himself in the government of the country. When things went out of control, one province after another severed its connection with the centre. Taxila was the first province to assert its independence after the death of Asoka.

### 5. Bad administration

With the passage of time, the administrative machinery became corrupt and inefficient. The already existing features of the Maurya system of administration like the severity of the Penal Code and the dreadful espionage system made matters still worse. The tone and morale of the administrative personnel deteriorated and turned for the worse during the weak rulers. The lack of proper transport facilities, sound finance and due to the reason that Pataliputra was not centrally located, further weakened the administrative machinery.

## 6. Weak successors of Asoka

The successors of Asoka were thoroughly incompetent. Everything went on well as long as strong and capable rulers were at the helm of affairs. As soon as the strong hand was removed, the inevitable decline of the Empire started. The Maurya dynasty ceased to produce supermen after Asoka. His successors were thoroughly incompetent to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of the state. Their corrupt and inefficient administration drivelled the country into the dotage of decay.

## 7. Brahminical reaction

It has been contended by some writers that the pro-Buddhist and anti-Brahminical policy of Asoka brought a Brahminical reaction against him. But this view should not be accepted because Asoka followed a policy of toleration in religious matters. His successors patronised different religions. It was a rare coincidence that Pushyamitra, the Commander-in-Chief of the Maurya army who murdered Brihadratha, the last ruler of the Maurya dynasty, happened to be a Brahmin. So, the decay of the empire had been generally attributed to a Brahminical reaction. But the reaction was not Brahminical but a dynastic revolution headed by Pushyamitra.

CHAPTER IV

# SUNGAS, KANVAS, KALINGAS & SATAVAHANAS

## 1. THE SUNGAS (187-75 B. C.)

As there is a lot of controversy about the origin of the Sungas, it is futile to go into the details. The Harsha Charita of Bana gives an account of the overthrow of the Maurya power by Pushyamitra. He murdered in broad daylight Brihadratha, the last ruler of the Maurya dynasty in 187 B. C. and laid the foundation of the Sunga dynasty. He ruled from 187 to 151 B. C. The dimension of his empire was much smaller than that of the Imperial Mauryas. He held sway over the central part of the one-time Maurya empire. His empire extended from Pataliputra to Narbada and included Ayodhya and Vidisa. It seems quite probable that Jullundar and Sialkot in the Punjab were under his sway. His capital was Pataliputra. The independent states bordering his empire were those of the Andhras in the South, the Kalingas in the south-east and parts of Northern India.

Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitra gives an account of the conquest of Vidarbha (Berar) by Pushyamitra's son Agnimitra who was then the Viceroy of Vidisa. After the fall of the Maurya empire, Vidarbha asserted its independence. Due to strained relations between Vidisa and Vidarbha, Agnimitra invaded Vidarbha and defeated the King. The kingdom was partitioned between two rival claimants who owed allegiance to the Sungas. The Mahabhashya of Patanjali and the Malavikagnimitra of Kalidasa give an account of the invasion of the Sunga kingdom by the Greeks. But Pushyamitra repulsed the attack and drove them out. He performed two horse-sacrifices to commemorate his victory over Vidarbha and the Greeks. If the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga were to be believed, Pushyamitra tasted defeat at the hands of Kharavela. According to Buddhist tradition, Pushyamitra persecuted the Buddhists. The successors of Pushyamitra were Agnimitra, Sujyeshtha, Sumitra, Vajramitra, Bhagavata and Devabhuti. The Puranas mention Andhraka, Pulindaka and Ghosha as the immediate successors of Sumitra. Devabhuti, the last ruler of the Sunga dynasty was murdered in 75 B. C. by a slave-girl at the instance of his minister Vasudeva who then assumed the reins of government.

## Importance of the Sunga period

The Sunga period marked a great epoch in the history of India. The Sunga Kings held a major portion of the Maurya Empire intact. They prevented the empire from falling an easy prey to the Greeks. The horse-sacrifice of Pushyamitra marked the Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism. Their ideal of Brahmanical way of life and the supremacy of Vedic cult was largely fulfilled and the fillip they got during their rule did diminish the growing prestige of Buddhism and Jainism. The Sunga rulers patronised Vaishnavism. It is evident from the inscriptions at Vidisa. The Sunga period witnessed some brilliant productions in art, architecture, sculpture and Sanskrit literature.

The Sunga art was basically different from the Maurya art. A pragmatic representation of life is the main feature of the period. The day-to-day life is vividly portrayed with artistic flourish and flavour. The sculptures depict the dress, mode of worship, beliefs and practices in an exquisite manner. The sculptors of the age switched over from wood to stone to depict their artistic skill. The Buddhist stupa at Bharhut is a brilliant production of the period. The stone railings of the stupa of Sanchi with gateways studded with Buddhist sculptures belong to this period.

The famous code of Manu or Manusmriti was compiled during this period. Though it incorporated the rigours of casteism, it also sought to establish a fairly high moral and ethical code for the betterment of society. The Brahmanical way of life was idealised though other religious beliefs suffered no humiliation. The inculcation of a sense of religious fervour did not, however, make the people forsake the worldly pleasures or responsibilities. This is evidenced by the literary outpourings during this period. Patanjali, the celebrated author of Mahabhashya, adorned the period. The Mahabhashya was a meticulous work, a commentary on the Panini-sutras. Patanjali was a close friend of Pushyamitra Sunga. The Commentator has been much acclaimed as the illustrious successor of Panini. The Sunga period in short was "a brilliant anticipation of the golden age of the Guptas".

## 2. THE KANVAS (75–30 B. C.)

Vasudeva laid the foundation of the Kanva dynasty after bringing about the murder of Devabhuti, the last ruler of the Sunga dynasty. There were altogether four Kanva Kings, *viz.*, Vasudeva, Bhumimitra, Narayana and Susarman. They ruled over a much smaller territory

than the Sungas. Their rule was brought to an end in 30 B C. by the Andhras. Though the Andhras brought about the downfall of the Kanva dynasty, there is no concrete evidence to prove the fact that their sway reached as far as Magadha. The intervening period in the history of Magadha between the overthrow of the Kanvas and the advent of the Guptas in the 4th century A. D. is shrouded in obscurity.

## 3. THE KALINGAS

Kalinga asserted its independence sometime after the death of Asoka. But the early history of Kalinga is shrouded in obscurity. The undated Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela (one of the rulers of the Cheta dynasty of Kalinga) throws some light on his own reign. Whether Kharavela lived in the first half of the second century B. C. or the first century B. C. is a matter of much learned discussion among scholars. Had he lived in the second century B. C. then he should have defeated Pushyamitra Sunga. The chief events mentioned in his inscription are: (1) He repaired and improved the capital city of Kalinganagaram. (2) He marched towards the West disregarding the protests of Satakarni (a Satavahana King) and brought to senses the Rathikas of the Maratha country and the Bhojas of Berar. (3) He sacked Gorathagiri (Gaya district) invaded Rajagriha and forced Demetrios to retire to Mathura. (4) He humbled Brihaspatimitra, a King of Magadha, and (5) he also made incursions in the south and got rich presents from the Pandya King. The last days of Kharavela and the history of Kalinga after his death still remain a mystery.

## 4. THE SATAVAHANAS OR ANDHRAS

### Original home

The Andhras mentioned in the Puranas or the Satavahanas mentioned in epigraphic records asserted their independence sometime after the death of Asoka. According to Puranic tradition, the Andhras brought about the overthrow of the Kanvas. But it stands to reasonable interpretation that the Andhras made inroads into both the Sunga and Kanva territories at different times, contributed their mite in wrecking the Sunga power and pulled down the Kanvas. There is a lot of controversy about the origin of the Andhras. The Andhras as mentioned in the Puranas refer to a set of people who occupied the Telugu-speaking territory between the Krishna and the Godavari. The original home of the Andhras might have been the Bellary district and from

there they might have extended their territory to Andhradesa and from thence to regions far and wide. The Brahmin origin of the Andhras is proved by the Nasik Inscription of Gautami Balasri, the mother of Gautamiputra Satakarni There is another theory that the original home of the Satavahanas was in the region round about Paithan (Pratishthana) in Maharashtra. The Hathigumpha Pillar Inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga clearly mentions that the territory of the Satavahana King Satakarni was to the west of Kalinga and not to the south. The Andhradesa was only a later acquisition by the Satavahanas. The Kanarese origin of the Andhras is, now, thoroughly discredited. The theory that Vidarbha (Berar) was the original home of the Satavahanas is not supported by any concrete evidence.

## Chronology

The Satavahana chronology is also a controversial problem. Different traditions give different dates. The Vayu Purana assigns a reign period of 300 years to the 19 princes of the family and the Matsya Purana 450 years to 30 Kings. Though the exact date of the origin of the Satavahana power cannot be asserted with certainty, yet from available sources and things that stand to reasonable interpretations, it may be surmised that Simuka, the first ruler of the dynasty, started his reign in 230 B. C.

## Political history of the Satavahanas

The origin and early life of Simuka, the founder of the dynasty, is shrouded in obscurity. Indian tradition considers him as a man of low origin It seems probable that the association of the later Satavahana Kings with Nagas and Brahmins elevated them in social status to Brahminhood. According to Jain tradition, Simuka was dethroned and killed owing to his tyrannical rule. Simuka was succeeded by his brother Krishna (207–189 B. C.). He extended the sway of his kingdom to the west as far as Nasik. The third King Sri Satakarni I, the son of Simuka, conquered Western Malwa. The Nanaghat (near Poona) inscription shows the statues of Simuka, Krishna, Satakarni, the latter's queen Naganika, and her father. The sway of the Satavahanas over the Maratha country was further strengthened by the marriage of Satakarni I with Naganika, a Maratha lady. Satakarni I performed two horse sacrifices to signalise his victories over the Sungas. His capital was Paithan situated on the banks of the river Godavari The sixth ruler Satakarni II conquered Malwa from the Sungas. He was the Satakarni whom Kharavela of Kalinga refers to in his Hathigumpha

inscription. Disregarding the protests of Satakarni, Kharavela brought to senses the Rathikas of the Maratha country and the Bhojas of Berar. The successors of Satakarni II brought about the downfall of the Kanva power. For nearly a century, the Satavahana power received a set back after the death of Satakarni II due to the advent of the Sakas. The Sakas made inroads into the territory of the Satavahanas and wrested parts of the Maratha country from them.

Gautamiputra Satakarni (80–104 A. D.), the 23rd ruler of the dynasty, who revived the power of the Satavahanas, was the greatest King in the line. The Nasik Inscription of Gautami Balasri, the mother of Gautamiputra Satakarni (published during the rule of Pulamayi II) describes him as "the destroyer of the Sakas, Yavanas, (Greeks) and Pahlavas [Parthians], the extirpator of the Khaharata family, restorer of the glory of Satavahana family, the elevator of his family to high fortune, the unique Brahmana who crushed the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas". Maharashtra, North Konkan, Berar, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Malwa, *etc.*, were the places mentioned in the inscription as under his direct sway. The mention about Andhradesa in the inscription is conspicuous by its absence. During the reign of his son Vasishthiputra Pulamayi II, the Sakas recovered some of their lost territories in Western Rajputana and Malwa. But he made good the loss by acquiring new territories between the Godavari and Krishna in the east. This is proved by the discovery of his inscription at Amaravati and a large number of coins spread throughout the area between the Godavari and the Krishna.

The last great King of the line was Yajnasri Satakarni (170–199 A. D). He recovered some of the provinces lost by his predecessors to the Saka ruler Rudradaman. His ship coins indicate his naval power. There is no doubt about his supremacy over Andhradesa. After the death of Yajnasri, the kingdom began to disintegrate. The causes for the dismemberment of the kingdom still remain unknown. The kingdom was divided into a number of independent principalities under various princes and feudatories. The Abhiras and the Traikutakas in Maharashtra, the Ikshvakus, the Brihatphalayanas and the Salankayanas in the Andhradesa and the Pallavas in the south rose to power on the debris of the Satavahana empire.

## Administration, Social life and Culture

The Satavahana polity was very simple. Kingship was hereditary. The King was all in all in the administration of the country. The

King as the guardian of the social order looked after the material welfare of the people. The feudatory chiefs were the Rajas, Mahabhojas and Maharathis. They looked after the local administration subject to the control and supervision of the central authority. The office of the *Mahasenapathi* was a new innovation introduced in a much later period of the Satavahana history. While some *Mahasenapathis* were in charge of the outlying provinces, some others headed departments at the centre. For the sake of administrative convenience, the state was divided into *Aharas*, each under the charge of a minister (*amatya*). The subordinate officers of the period were the treasurers, stewards, goldsmiths, coiners, administrators, record-keepers, ushers and ambassadors. The lowest unit of administration was the village where the traditional form of government prevailed.

In society, new sub-castes began to take form and shape on an occupational basis such as shepherds (*golikas*) and ploughmen (*halikas*). Foreigners like Sakas and Yavanas intermingled with the local population. Women occupied an honoured place in society. Both men and women wore simple dress with ornaments in plenty. Village life was not devoid of the luxuries of life. Trade and industry grew under the fostering care of the Kings. A number of ports existed on the western and eastern coasts through which people carried on brisk trade with foreign countries.

Buddhism which had already taken deep roots in the country in the 3rd century B. C. continued to flourish in the Satavahana period. Brahminism also flourished in the country due to the royal patronage extended to it by most of the rulers. The Hindus worshipped a plurality of gods like Indra, Vasudeva, Sun, Moon, Siva, Vishnu, Krishna, Ganesa and Pasupati. The tone and morale of the administration and social life of the people remained more or less unchanged during the rule of the feudatories of the Satavahanas. But some changes were introduced here and there.

The contribution of the Satavahanas in the realm of art is immense. The brilliant productions in art, architecture, sculpture and painting of the period were mainly confined to objects and subjects related to Buddhism. Architecture in the form of caves and temples made great progress during the period. Many Siva and cave temples were constructed during the period. During the Satavahana period, the country was studded with a large number of stupas in Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Jaggayyapeta, Gantasala and Nagarjunikonda. The stupas

at Amaravati bear eloquent testimony to the Graeco-Roman influence in Satavahana art. In the realm of painting, the Ajanta school begins with the Satavahanas. The Satavahana kings were great patrons of learning. The Prakrit literature made great progress during the period. The Satavahana king Hala was an accomplished poet and the Prakrit anthology *Sattasai* or *Saptasati* is ascribed to him. Gunadhya, the most celebrated courtpoet in the Prakrit language flourished during this period. He was the author of the original *Brihat Katha*. Sarvavarman wrote the *Katantra* in the Prakrit language. Sanskrit also got enriched on a humbler scale.

CHAPTER V

# YAVANAS, SAKAS, PAHLAVAS & KUSHANS

## 1. THE YAVANA INVASIONS

Ever since the conquest of India by Darius I (522–486 B. C.), the Yavanas or the Greeks of Ionia in Asia Minor came into contact with the people of north-western India. The invasion of India by Alexander in 327–325 B. C. made the contact more intimate. Some of the Greeks settled down in the cities set up by Alexander in India. Seleukos who made himself master of the eastern part of the empire of Alexander after his death, tasted defeat at the hands of Chandragupta Maurya in 305 B. C. For a century after this reverse suffered by Seleukos, the relations between India and the Seleucid Emperors remained very cordial.

### Rise of the Bactrian Greeks

The two provinces of Parthia (Khurasan and the adjacent region to the south-east of the Caspian Sea) and Bactria (territory around Balkh in northern Afghanistan beyond the Hindukush) which once formed the empire of Seleukos proclaimed their independence sometime about 250 B. C. during the rule of Antiochos II, the Seleucid Emperor. Diodotos I was the founder of the independent Greek kingdom of Bactria. He followed an aggressive policy towards Parthia. His son Diodotos II concluded a friendly alliance with Parthia fearing the might of the Seleucid Emperor. He was superseded by Euthydemos. He came into clash with Antiochos III, the Seleucid Emperor in 208 B. C. The war dragged on for two years and finally Antiochos III recognised the independence of Bactria in 206 B. C. He gave his daughter in marriage to Demetrios, the son of Euthydemos. Antiochos III crossed the Hindukush and defeated Subhagasena, the independent ruler of Gandhara. The Indian ruler had to pay a huge war indemnity and surrender some elephants. Some time after 197 B. C., Euthydemos established his authority over Southern Afghanistan and the adjoining areas of Iran and also over parts of north-western India. He was succeeded by his son Demetrios in 200 B. C. He conquered a larger part of the Punjab. When Demetrios was pre-occupied with the Indian conquests, the Bactrian throne was occupied in 171 B. C., by a spirited leader named Eukratides. So he rest contented himself with

his territories in the Indus Valley and ruled over it with Sialkot as the capital. Eukratides also invaded India During his return march to Bactria, he was murdered by his son Heliokles in 150 B. C. He was the last Yavana ruler of Bactria. His kingdom was occupied by the Parthians and the Sakas. After the loss of Bactria, Heliokles withdrew to his dominions in the Kabul Valley and India in 125 B. C.

## Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers

From the study of coins we are able to know that more than thirty Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers held sway in Central and Southern Afghanistan and North-western India after the loss of Bactria. These rulers either belonged to the House of Euthydemos or Eukratides. From a study of the weight, quality and portrait in the coins issued by these rulers, it is possible to deduce as to which group the rulers belonged. Menander of the Euthydemos line was the greatest of these rulers. He came to power after the death of Demetrios in 165 B. C. According to Strabo, he conquered "more nations than Alexander". He issued a variety of coins. He ruled over many cities with Sialkot as the capital. He was a benefactor of Buddhism. His territories included the central parts of Afghanistan, North-west Frontier province, the Punjab, Sind, Rajputana, Kathiawar and probably a part of Western Uttar Pradesh also.

## The end of the Indo-Bactrian rule in India

After the death of Menander, his minor son Strato I, came to power. Heliokles established his authority over Gandhara and Taxila. The government of Strato I was carried on by his mother Agathokleia as regent. The authority of Strato I was confined to the territory between the Jhelum and Mathura. The provinces of Sind and Kathiawar broke away from the central authority. Antialkidas, who succeeded Heliokles, set up his capital at Taxila. The eastern kingdom continued its precarious existence under the successors of Strato I. By about 120 B. C , the Sakas established their authority over the territory between Sind and Kathiawar. In 80 B. C , they established their control over Taxila and Gandhara. Mathura which had already become independent in 90 B. C. was conquered by the Sakas in 60 B. C. Hermaios was the last ruler of the western kingdom. In 30 B. C., the eastern kingdom of Hippostratus was overthrown by the Sakas. The western kingdom under its last ruler Hermaios suffered the same fate in the same year at the hands of the Parthians.

### Effects of the Indo-Greek rule

The second inroad of the Greeks into north-western India was more important than that of the first one under Alexander. The Indo-Greeks who occupied India for nearly two centuries slowly got indianised. The conquest produced some cultural effects. The Indians as well as the Greeks got benefited. There was a mutual exchange of culture. The Indians learnt a good deal from the Greeks and the Indians in their turn impressed the Greeks with their rich cultural heritage. In the field of medicine, astronomy, coinage and art, the Greek contact proved very effective. The Gandhara School of art which developed during the time of Kanishka I was influenced by the Greek art. In the field of mathematics, the numerals, the decimal system and the zero are the unique contributions made by the Indians not only to the Greeks but to the whole world. In the field of philosophy, the Greeks were struck dumb-found by the celestial heights reached by the Indian philosophers. In the field of religion, the Greeks became either Hindus or Buddhists. They made images of the Buddha and worshipped him. The development of the Mahayana form of Buddhism (a form in which Buddha was worshipped as God) during the time of Kanishka I may be traced to the Hellenistic influence. In the sphere of politics and literature, Greek influence was practically nil. The contact gave a great stimulus to the development of trade. On the whole, it was a saga of mutual cultural conquest.

## 2. SAKAS AND THE PAHLAVAS

The intervening period between the end of the Indo-Greek rule in India and the advent of the Kushans witnessed the rule of north-western India by a set of foreigners known as Sakas (Scythians) and the Pahlavas (Parthians). The tribal movements in Central Asia of a nomadic race called Yue-chi in the 2nd century B. C. compelled the Sakas to enter Bactria. The Sakas put an end to the Greek rule in Bactria. Heliokles was the king of Bactria at that time. The onward march of Yue-chi further drove the Sakas to Parthia. They clashed with the Parthian rulers. Though the Parthian kingdom received a setback, the glory of Parthia was revived by Mithradates II (123-88 B.C.). The Sakas were beaten back. Some of the Sakas settled in the country and accepted the overlordship of Mithradates II. Thus a section of the Sakas got parthianised and came to be known as parthianised Sakas. The remaining section of the Sakas marched through Southern Afghanistan and Baluchistan and entered the lower Indus Valley. As the

successors of Eukratides kept a vigilant watch on the north-western border, the Sakas were forced to take a circuitous route to enter India. Gradually they penetrated towards the north. In 30 B.C., the eastern kingdom of Hippostratus was overthrown by them. In the same year, the parthianised Sakas (Pahlavas) overthrew the western kingdom of Hermaios.

The earliest Saka Satrap of the Sakas was Maues of the inscriptions or Moga of the coins (20 B. C-22 A.D.). He assumed the high sounding title of *Rajaraja* 'King of Kings'. He issued a variety of coins. His empire extended from Gandhara to Mathura. Maues was succeeded by Azes I (5 B.C.-30 A.D.). He started the Vikrama Samvat era. The Satraps of Taxila and Mathura were overthrown by the Pahlavas and Kushans respectively.

## Western Saka Satraps (Maharashtra and Ujjain)

An adventurous section of Sakas who belonged to the family of Khaharatas penetrated through the Narbada and Tapti under their leader Bhunaka. He ruled over Saurashtra (Kathiawar) with Nasik as his capital. Nahapana was the greatest Satrap in this line. His coins and inscriptions show that his political sway extended from Maharashtra and north Konkan to Ajmer including Kathiawar and Malwa. He ruled during the last quarter of the first century A. D. The Western Satraps made inroads into Satavahana territories and wrested large chunks of the Maratha territory from them. Nahapana tasted defeat at the hands of the Satavahana King Gautamiputra Satakarni.

Chashtana founded a second line of Western Satraps. Their capital was Ujjain. The greatest Satrap of this line was Rudradaman I (130-150 A.D.) He assumed the high sounding title of Mahakshatrapa. The Girnar (Junagarh) Rock Inscription of Rudradaman I points out that he defeated the Satavahana ruler Satakarni twice and wrested from him Malwa, Kathiawar and North Konkan. The Satakarni referred to in the inscription should have been Vasishtiputra Pulamayi. Rudradaman did not completely blow up the power of Pulamayi because of his "non-remote relationship". A cave inscription testifies to the fact that the Satakarni in question was the son-in-law of Rudradaman. He also defeated the Yaudheyas who ruled over the banks of the river Sutlej and some parts of Bharatpur. The Girnar Inscription mentions the territories under his authority, *viz.*, Malwa, Kathiawar, Marwar, Cutch, Sind, North Konkan, *etc.* He repaired and improved the Sudarsana

Lake without raising taxes from the people. He was a gifted scholar well-versed in grammar, political science, logic and music. He never killed men except in battle. The Girnar Inscription gives a clear picture of the extent of the empire of Chandragupta Maurya.

### Dawnfall of the Western Satraps

Very little is known about the 18 successors of Rudradaman I. From 295-348 A. D., no one assumed the title of Mahakshatrapa. Internal dissensions, division of the country and the Satavahana aggression gradually paved the way for the dismemberment of the Satraphy. The Sassanian rulers of Persia often made inroads into Indian territories and struck blow after blow on the Western Satraps during the first half of the 4th century A. D. When the Sassanian rulers loosened their grip, Rudrasena III temporarily revived the powers of the Satraps in the third quarter of the 4th century A. D. The death-knell of the Western Satraps was sounded by Chandragupta II Vikramaditya who killed Rudrasimha III, the last Western Satrap and annexed Western India in 395 A. D.

### Pahlavas or Parthians in North-Western India

The parthianised Sakas or Pahlavas under their leader Gondophernes overthrew the Western Greek Kingdom of Hermaios in 30 B. C. He ruled over Taxila and Afghanistan from 19 to 45 A. D. According to Christian legend, he was converted to the Christian faith by St. Thomas. After his death, his dominions were divided among his successors. Internal dissensions and mutual jealousies made them fall an easy prey to the Kushans.

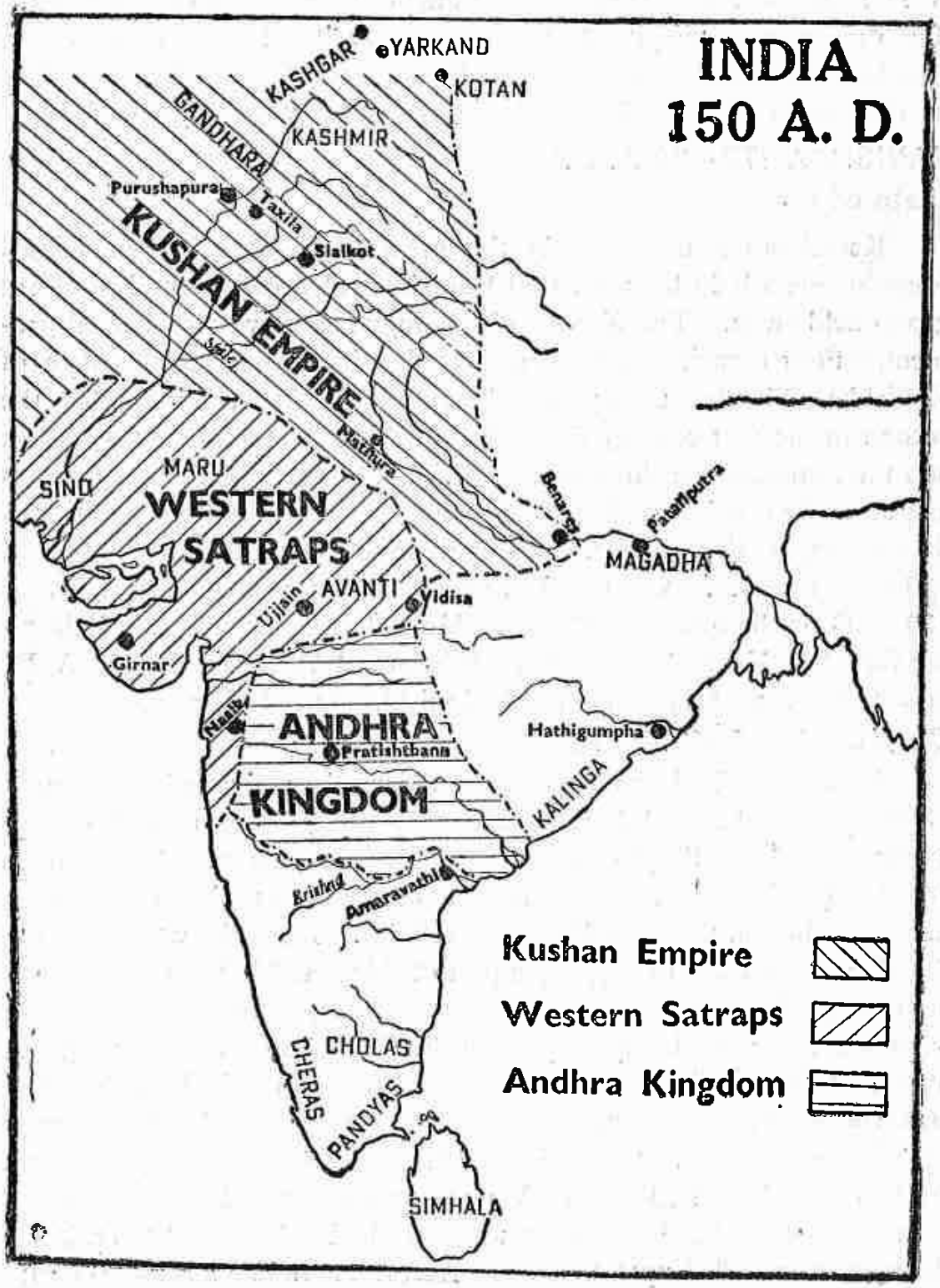
## 3. THE KUSHANS

### Early History

The Kushans, who played a dominant role in Indian politics, belonged to a branch of the Yue-chi tribe who dwelt in the province of Kan-su in north-western China. They were expelled from their original abode in 165 B.C , by a tribe called Hiung-nu which defeated and killed the Yue-chi leader. The Yue-chi started their westward movement and defeated the Sakas living on the banks of the river, Jaxartes (Syr Darya). But the Yue-chi were driven out from this region by their old enemies and so they came and settled in the Oxus valley. Soon they occupied Bactria and Sogdiana. The Yue-chi territory was divided into five principalities.

## The predecessors of Kanishka

Kujula Kadphises or Kadphises I (15-65 A.D.) was the first King of the Kushans. He united the five principalities and established his




authority over them. He defeated the Parthians and extended his authority over Afghanistan. He issued coins on the model of Roman

coins. This shows that there was intimate cultural and commercial contact with the Roman empire. He died at the ripe old age of 80. He was succeeded by his son Wema Kadphises or Kadphises II (65-75 A. D.). According to Chinese tradition, he extended his rule over India The Punjab and a portion of the Gangetic valley formed a part of his kingdom. He issued gold coins on Roman model. The figure of Siva on the reverse of the coins shows that he was a worshipper of Siva.

## KANISHKA (78-120 A. D.)

### Date of Kanishka

Kanishka was undoubtedly the greatest of the Kushan Kings. Some scholars hold the view that Kanishka ruled before the Kadphises group held sway. The Kushan chronology is a very complicated problem. Four theories have been forged with regard to the date of Kanishka. The first theory fixes the date in the first century B.C., the second in the first century A.D., the third in the second century A. D. and the fourth in the third century A.D. The first and the last theories can be easily brushed aside as the Chinese and the Tibetan traditions do not support these views. The real conflict is between the second and third theories. Whether Kanishka came to power in 78 A. D. or 120 A. D. is the question at issue. Modern research throws light on the fact that Kanishka started the Saka era of 78 A.D. So, 78 A. D. may be taken as the year in which Kanishka started his reign.

### Conquests of Kanishka

As soon as Kanishka came to the throne, he embarked on a career of conquest and consolidation. He sent an expedition to Kashmir and annexed it. According to Buddhist tradition, he captured the territories as far as Pataliputra. After the capture of Pataliputra, he brought with him Asvaghosha, the great Buddhist scholar. Kanishka wrested from the Western Satraps of Ujjain, a part of Malwa. He led a military expedition to China but was defeated by the Chinese general Pan-chao. He led a second expedition and defeated the Chinese general Pan-yang and wrested from the Chinese Emperor the territories of Kashgar, Yarkand and Kotan. He ruled over an extensive empire with Purushapura (modern Peshawar) as the capital. His empire outside India included Afghanistan, Bactria, Kashgar, Yarkand and Kotan. In India proper, it extended from Kashmir in the north to the Narbada in the south. In the east, it extended upto Benaras. According to one legend, the soldiers of Kanishka got tired of his insatiable thirst for conquest and some of them strangled him to death.

## Kanishka and Buddhism

Kanishka's title to fame rests not on his conquests but on his monuments and the services rendered by him for the propagation of Buddhism. In the early part of his rule, he became a convert to the Buddhist faith at the instance of Asvaghosha, the celebrated author of *Buddha Charitha*. Though he patronised Buddhism, he did not follow a policy of religious intoleration. He took many effective steps to spread Buddhism. He constructed monasteries, erected stupas and sent missionaries to far-off places to propagate the Buddhist faith. He convened the fourth and the last great Buddhist Council at Kundalavana in Kashmir or at Jullunder in the Punjab. The Council was attended by about 500 monks from all over India including Vasumitra, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Parsva. Vasumitra presided over the meeting and conducted the proceedings. The whole of the Buddhist literature and the conflicting points were discussed threadbare and the outcome was the *Mahavibhasha* or the Buddhist Encyclopaedia. The scriptures were engraved on copper plates and preserved in a stupa.

The fourth Buddhist Council inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Buddhism. Hitherto, the Hinayana form of Buddhism, *i. e.*, Buddhism in which Buddha was not worshipped as a God, flourished in the country. After the Council a new type of Buddhism, the Mahayana form of Buddhism, came into existence. In this type of Buddhism, Buddha was worshipped as God. This change was not something sudden. It was due to a changed outlook among the Buddhists to have some object as the centre of their worship. The Hindu method of worshipping images might have appealed to them. Further, foreigners such as the Greeks who came and settled in India, gradually got indianised and most of them became converts to the Buddhist faith. They started making idols of the Buddha and worshipped him in their customary and time-honoured way of worshipping the Greek Gods.

## Kanishka as a patron of art and letters

Kanishka was a great builder. He beautified the capital city Purushapura with many buildings. The monastery he constructed at Purushapura was a brilliant production in architecture. He beautified the city of Mathura with a number of monasteries, statues and sculptures. He patronised men of letters. His court was adorned by luminaries like Vasumitra, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Parsva, Charaka, *etc.* He patro-

nised the Gandhara School of art. This school of art was influenced by Greek and other foreign influences.

Perfect specimens of the images of the Buddha were made with the Greek art in the background. So the Gandhara School of art came to be otherwise known as the Graeco-Buddhist art. The chief centres of this art were Jalalabad, Hadda and Bamiyan in Afghanistan, the Swat Valley and the Peshawar District. This art lasted from the second half of the first century B. C. to the fifth century A. D. Though the art was Hellenistic in form and execution, it was certainly Indian in content and subject-matter. When this art passed away, it had no part to play in the subsequent development of Indian art. But it is a matter of pride that it became the parent of the Buddhist art of Chinese, Turkistan, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan. Side by side with the Gandhara School of art, indigenous schools also flourished at Mathura and other places. The Indian artists produced the images of the Buddha in Indian style. Kanishka issued a number of coins.

## Estimate

Kanishka was undoubtedly the greatest of the Kushan rulers and one of the greatest rulers of ancient India. He was not only a great conqueror but also an excellent administrator. He patronised men of letters and encouraged art and architecture. The Gandhara School of art progressed under his paternal care. *Buddha Charitha* of Asvaghosha is an epic poetry in Sanskrit. Sanskrit literature was revived during his reign in a humbler scale. Thus by patronising poets and dramatists, his rule formed a fitting prelude to the age of the Guptas, which witnessed a continuous and regular outpour of brilliant productions in literature.

For the glorious and meritorious services rendered by Kanishka to Buddhism, he is credited with the title of "Second Asoka". It is true that Kanishka constructed monasteries, erected stupas and sent missions to far-off places to propagate the faith. But in outlook and deep intellectual convictions, there was an ocean of difference between himself and Asoka. Asoka practised what he preached. He renounced war once for all after the Kalinga episode. But war after war merely whetted the appetite of Kanishka. The comparison breaks down even at this point. Harsha Vardhana of Kanauj who came at a later period deserves for more than Kanishka the title "Second Asoka". Kanishka may at best be considered as "Second Harsha".

## Successors of Kanishka

The successors of Kanishka were Vasishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva. The last great ruler of the dynasty—Vasudeva—ruled from 152 to 177 A. D. The Kushan empire began to disintegrate after his reign. After that, the empire was divided into small principalities. The Nagas put an end to these principalities towards the close of the third century A. D. and the first quarter of the 4th century A. D. The Gupta Emperors put an end to the Naga rule in the middle of the 4th century A. D.

CHAPTER VI

# THE GUPTA AGE

## 1. CHANDRA-GUPTA I (320-330 A. D.)

Magadha once again shot into fame early in the 4th century A. D. under the Imperial Guptas. The early history of the Gupta dynasty is shrouded in obscurity. Sri-gupta and Ghatotkacha-gupta, the grandfather and the father respectively of Chandra-gupta I assumed the royal title of *Maharaja* (King) only. This obviously indicates that they were only petty rulers. But from the title of *Maharajadhiraja* (King of Kings) assumed by Chandra-gupta I, it could be safely deduced that Chandra-gupta carved out an independent kingdom in Magadha. He liberated the country from the Scythian (Saka) satraps. He celebrated his coronation in 320 A. D. by establishing the Gupta era. He strengthened his position by marrying Kumaradevi, the Lichchhavi princess of Vaisali. The event was commemorated by the issue of gold coins jointly by Chandra-gupta and his Lichchhavi queen. He died in 330 A.D.

## 2. SAMUDRA-GUPTA (330–380 A. D.)

Samudra-gupta was the son of Chandra-gupta I and Kumaradevi. He came to the throne after his father. He was the most distinguished member in the line of the Imperial Guptas. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription composed by Harisena, gives an elaborate and authentic account of his reign. Though Samudra-gupta was not the eldest son, he was earmarked from the very beginning as the heir-apparent to the throne as he showed unmistakable proof of his remarkable valour and ability. This inevitably led to a revolt of his brothers. But Samudra-gupta put down the revolt.

### Conquests of Samudra-gupta

Like his illustrious father, Samudra-gupta also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. First of all he riveted his attention on the subjugation of the kingdoms in the *Aryavarta*. The nine Kings defeated by him in North India were Rudradeva, Matila, Nagadatta, Chandra-varman, Ganapati-naga, Nagasena, Achyuta, Nandin and Balavarman. The territories of the above mentioned Kings included the Upper Gangetic Valley, Central India and Eastern India. He brought under his subjection the forest countries of the Vindhyas. The

five border kingdoms of Samatata (in Eastern Bengal), Davaka (in Assam), Kamarupa (in Western Assam), Nepal and Kartripura (Kumaon, Garhwal and Rohilkhand) paid homage to him and accepted his overlordship. The nine tribal states which accepted his supremacy were the Malavas, Arjunayanas, Yaudheyas, Madrakas, Abhiras, Prarjunas, Sanakanikas, Kakas and Kharaparikas.

After subjugating the kingdoms in the *Aryavarta*, Samudra-gupta turned his attention to the south. The twelve Kings in the south defeated by him were Mahendra of Kosala (in the Upper Mahanadi valley), Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara (a great wilderness in Central India), Mahendragiri of Pishtapura (Pithapuram in the Godavari District), Mantaraja of Kaurala (identity not definitely known), Svamidatta of Kottura (identity not definitely known), Damana of Erandapalla (in the Ganjam District), Vishnugopa, the Pallava ruler of Kanchi, Nilaraja of Avamukta (identity not definitely known), Hastivarman of Vengi (between the Krishna and Godavari), Ugrasena of Palakka (Nellore District), Kubera of Devarashtra (in the Vizagapatam District), and Dhananjaya of Kusthalapura (identity not definitely known). The reference to the effect that he set at liberty all the southern rulers indicates that his southern campaigns were only in the nature of a *Dharmavijaya* to assert his supremacy quite in contrast to the *Digvijaya* in *Aryavarta*. To put it picturesquely, his policy in the south was like "catching butterflies and setting them free". Hence the southern potentates were not annexed to the Gupta empire. As all the places mentioned in his Deccan campaigns were located in Eastern Deccan, it is quite probable that he did not undertake the conquest of Western Deccan.

The conquests of Samudra-gupta raised his prestige and earned for him the respect and adoration of foreign rulers. The Kushans and the Western Satraps paid homage to Samudra-gupta. Meghavarna, the King of Ceylon, sent a mission to him seeking permission to construct a monastery at Bodh-gaya for Ceylonese pilgrims. He permitted the Ceylonese King to construct a monastery. Samudra-gupta performed a horse-sacrifice to signalise his victories.

## Extent of the Empire

The empire of Samudra-gupta included practically the whole of North India excluding Kashmir, Western Punjab, Western Rajputana, Sind and Gujarat. It also included the highlands of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa and a vast stretch of territory extending as far south as

Kanchi. A sizable portion of North India was under the direct control of Samudra-gupta. The tributary states surrounded the centrally administered areas on all sides except the south. Beyond these tributary states on the west and north-west, lay the independent principalities of the Sakas and Kushans respectively. They paid homage to Samudra-gupta. The states bordering the eastern coast of the Deccan and the Pallava kingdom were vassal kingdoms.

## Estimate

Samudra-gupta was undoubtedly the greatest King of the Guptas and the real founder of the Gupta empire. He ruled over an extensive empire with Pataliputra as the capital. He distinguished himself as a great conqueror. His extensive conquests speak volumes of his military prowess. For the military laurels own by him, Smith calls him the "Indian Napoleon". He assumed the title of "Vikramanka". He treated the fallen foe with great magnanimity. He was not only a great conqueror but also an excellent administrator. He made the penal code and the administration of justice more humane and benevolent. He strained every nerve to contribute to the material and cultural progress of the people. He was a patron of art and letters. He was himself a versatile genius well-versed in literature, music, and painting. His poetical accomplishments earned for him the title "King of Poets". His court was adorned by men of letters like Harisena and Vasubandhu. Samudra-gupta issued a number of gold coins. The Allahabad inscription is a fitting monument to his greatness. He was a staunch Vaishnavite. But he was not intolerant to other faiths. According to Dr. R. K. Mookerji: "While Asoka stands for Peace and Non-violence, Samudra-gupta stands for the opposite principle of War and Aggression. The one had a contempt for conquests; the other had a passion for them. He was from the very first fixed by the time-honoured ideal of a Kshatriya king which was to make himself the sovereign of the entire country upto its very ends and became a king of kings. In pursuit of this orthodox ideal set for a ruler, Samudra-gupta made out an elaborate programme of conquests in different directions (digvijaya) and realised it to a degree which has justly won him the title of an Indian Napoleon". For his brilliant accomplishments, he richly deserves the epithet "Great" and deserves a high rank among the sovereigns of ancient India.

## 3. CHANDRA-GUPTA II VIKRAMADITYA (380–413 A D)

Samudra-gupta was succeeded by his son Chandra-gupta II. Just as Chandra-gupta I selected Samudra-gupta to occupy the throne, Samudra-gupta chose Chandra-guptaII, an younger son to succeed him. Chandra-gupta II was the worthy son of a worthy father. Certain literary traditions like Devichandraguptam and numismatic evidence point out that Samudra-gupta was immediately succeeded by Rama-gupta and not by Chandra-gupta II. So Rama-gupta may be considered as the immediate successor to Samudra-gupta.

### Matrimonial alliances

Before Chandra-gupta II launched into a career of conquest, he strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances. He conciliated the Naga chieftains of Upper and Central Provinces by marrying Kubera-naga, a Naga princess. Chandra-gupta's daughter, Prabhavathi-gupta through Kuberanaga, was married to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka King of Berar. These matrimonial alliances earned for him the goodwill and support of his matrimonial allies.

### Conquests of Chandra-gupta II

Like his illustrious father, Chandra-gupta II Vikramaditya also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. His military accomplishments earned for him the epithet "Vikramaditya" (Son of valour). He extended the western frontier of the Gupta empire. He conquered the whole of Malwa and Saurashtra from the Western Satraps. It was he who gave a fatal blow to the Western Satraps. He defeated and killed Rudrasimha III, the last Western Satrap and annexed Western India in 395 A. D. Thus by extending the limits of the western frontier to the Arabian Sea, he paved the way for greater cultural and commercial contact with the Roman empire. From the finds of his coins as far as the banks of the Chenab, it seems probable that he extended the authority of the Guptas upto the banks of the Chenab. He performed a horse-sacrifice to signalise his victories in Western India.

### Visit of Fa-hien

The renowned Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien visited India during the reign of Chandra-gupta II. He spent 15 years of his life in travel out of which he spent 9 years in India. The places he visited in India were Peshawar, Mathura, Kanauj, Sravasti, Benaras, Kapilavastu, Kusinagara, Vaisali, Pataliputra and other places. The main mission

in his life was to visit the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha and search for the sacred tenets and relics of Buddhism. The pilgrim was so much preoccupied with and immersed in the search and study of the sacred books of Buddhism, that he did not even mention the name of the Emperor in whose empire he spent 6 years. But here and there, he flashes some sidelights on the economic, social and moral life of the people and the administration prevailing under the Guptas. The travel accounts of Fa-hien in spite of their drawbacks and limitations form a very valuable source of information for the study of the Gupta period.

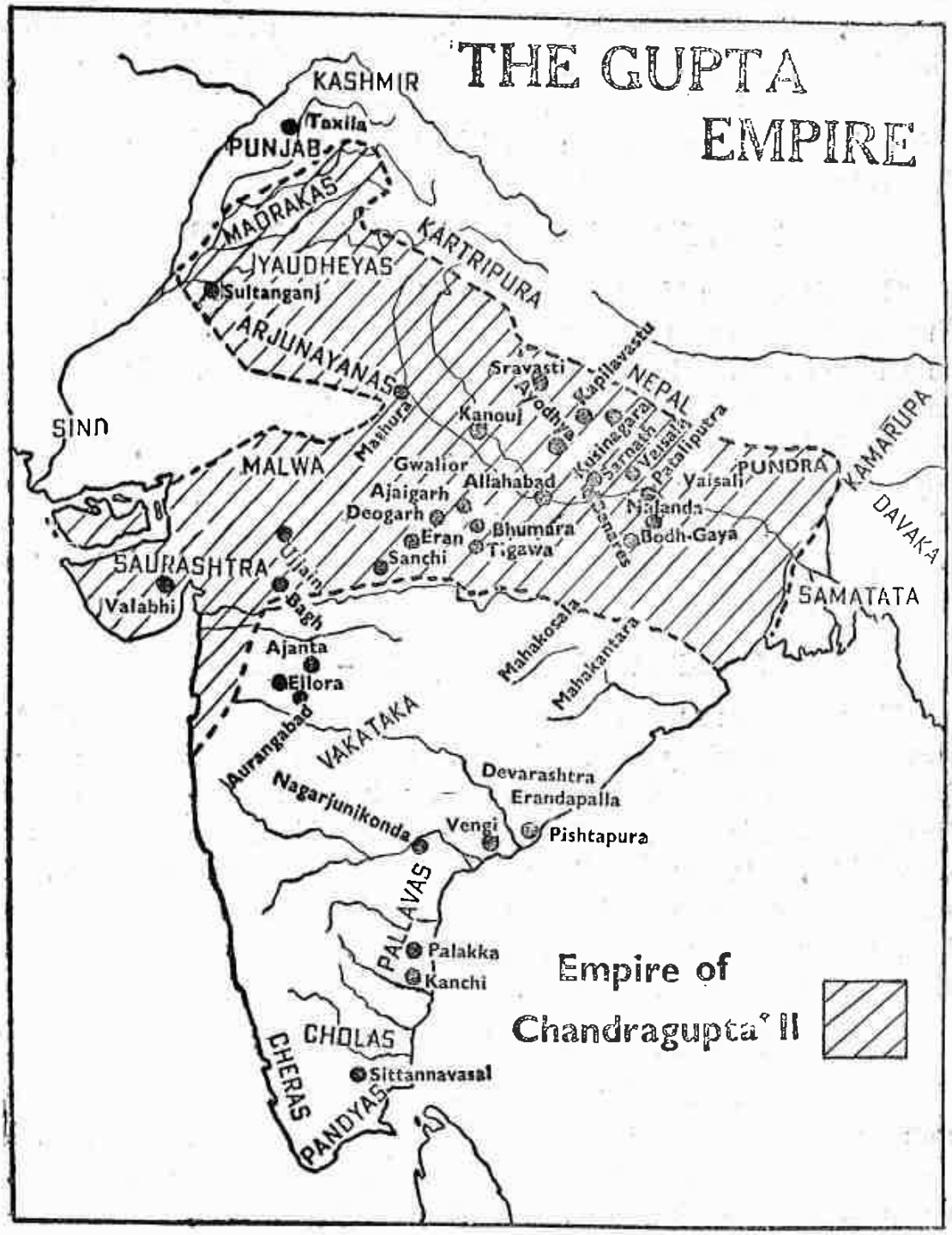
Fa-hien spent three years of his travels at Pataliputra. In the city, he found two large Buddhist monasteries which attractcd students from all over India and acted as centres of Mahayana and Hinayana learning. Asoka's magnificent palace at Pataliputra evoked the awe and admiration of the Chinese pilgrim. According to him, it was "all made by spirits which Asoka employed". In the cities of Magadha, the people led a rich and prosperous life. They competed with one another in excelling in such moral virtues like munificence and righteousness. The country was strewn with a number of rest-houses. The hospital at Pataliputra gave a free medical aid.

Fa-hien gives a graphic description of the condition of the people in the Middle Kingdom (Upper Gangetic Valley). He says: "The people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates and their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The King governs without decapitation or other corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly, or heavily, according to the circumstances of each case. Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off". Though the facts furnished in the above passage cannot be taken in their entirety, yet they throw some light on the administrative system of Chandra-gupta II. Fa-hien gives an account of the hold of Buddhism in different parts of the country. He observes that Buddhism was very popular in North Western India, flourished in Bengal and was making strides in Mathura. In Madhyadesa, it was fast losing its ground and Brahminical Hinduism was gaining the upper hand.

**Estimate**

The reign of Chandra-gupta II Vikramaditya forms one of the

brightest chapters in the history of India. He ruled over an extensive empire. Though Pataliputra continued to be his capital, yet for all practical purposes Ujjain became his second capital. He was a patron of art and letters. According to an Indian legend, his court was ador-




ned by *navaratnas* (nine gems) including Kalidasa. He issued a variety of gold coins. Though he a was staunch Vaishnavite, he was not intolerant of other faiths. He completed and consolidated the work of his

father. The *Pax Romana* or Roman Peace gave peace and prosperity to the Romans during the rule of the mighty Caesars. The peace ensured an orderly form of government and resulted in fuller and freer expression of the creative talents of the people in art, architecture and literature. Similarly the *Pax Gupta* or the Guptan Peace of the Gupta rulers in general and Chandra-gupta II in particular, paved the way for the brilliant productions in art, architecture and literature and thus the period richly deserves the epithet, "Golden Age or Classical Age of the Guptas".

### 4. KUMARA-GUPTA I (414-455 A. D.)

Chandra-gupta II was succeeded by his son Kumara-gupta I. Though he did not make any fresh acquisition to the empire, he held the empire intact. He also performed a horse-sacrifice. He assumed the high-sounding title of *Mahendraditya*. He issued a number of coins. He laid the foundation of the Nalanda University. He was also a staunch Vaishnavite like his father. But he was not intolerant of other faiths. The Gupta Empire received a rude shock towards the close of his reign when the Pushyamitras, a tribe inhabiting the Narbada valley, outnumbered the imperial forces in a battle.

### 5. SKANDA-GUPTA (455-467 A. D.)

Kumara-gupta I was succeeded by his son Skanda-gupta. He retrieved the past glory of the Guptas. He saved the empire from extinction by defeating the Pushyamitras. He was the last great ruler of the dynasty. He was a staunch Vaishnavite. He was not intolerant of other faiths. He successfully repelled the Hun invasion of India. It was after this that a section of the Huns went to Rome and pulled down the mighty Roman empire. After the death of Skanda-gupta, the empire began to disintegrate.

### 6. THE SUCCESSORS OF SKANDA-GUPTA

Puru-gupta, Narasimha-gupta and Kumara-gupta II—the three immediate successors of Skanda-gupta—ruled from 467 to 477 A. D. During this period, the empire lost Kathiawar and Western Malwa. The next ruler Budha-gupta ruled from 477 to 496 A. D. The next two rulers were Tathagata-gupta and Baladitya. After the rule of Budha-gupta, the Huns under Toramana and Mihiragula established their authority in Malwa by about 500 A. D. Mihiragula, the son of Toramana, was defeated by Baladitya. He was the last ruler of the

dynasty. By about 550 A. D., the Gupta power declined. The Later Gupta rulers associated with Malwa in the first instance and Magadha in the second, came to power in the later half of the sixth century A. D. The power of the Later Guptas came to an end in or shortly before the second quarter of the 8th century A. D.

## 7. THE GUPTA SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

### The King

The King occupied the foremost place in the administrative machinery. Kingship was hereditary. But in certain cases, younger sons were nominated to the exalted office. The King wielded legislative, executive and judicial powers. Though he wielded great powers, he never behaved like a despot. The King strained every nerve to promote the material and cultural welfare of the people. The King was a law-abiding monarch. The law was above the King and not the King above the law. In the day-to-day administration of the country, he was assisted by a council of ministers and *Sabha* or the Assembly. The King had to discharge constituent, religious, ministrant, cultural and diplomatic duties. The constituent or the most elementary duty of the King was the protection of the life and property of the people from internal threats and external danger. As the custodian of the established religion of the land, the King had to construct temples and munificently endow them with liberal grants. The ministrant duties of the King were to look after the general welfare of the people, undertake ameliorative measures to reduce the rigours during calamities, look after the various problems like trade, industry, education, *etc.* The cultural duties of the King were to patronise and promote fine arts. The diplomatic duty of the King amounted to the formulation of a sound foreign policy.

### The Council of Ministers and the Assembly

The Council of Ministers known as *Mantrimandalam* consisted of people well-versed in the art of statecraft. The chief minister was called the *Mantri Mukhya*. The *Purohita* occupied a very important place in the Council. The *Amatyas* or *Mantrins* who headed the various departments were the other members of the Council. The office of the *Amatya* was generally hereditary. Utmost secrecy was maintained during transaction of business in the Council. The *Sabha* probably acted as a representative body.

### Revenue Administration

The main source of income for the government came from the tax on land. The share of the State was fixed at one-sixth of the gross produce payable in cash or kind. Public revenue which flowed from other sources came from the taxes collected from the guilds of merchants and artisans, income from forests, meadows, salt-mines and mint. The main items of public expenditure were the amount spent on defence, maintenance of the royal household, pay for officers, public works, relief works, money spent for the construction of temples and the promotion of fine arts, *etc.* As the State stood for the material and spiritual welfare of the people, a considerable amount was spent on welfare and cultural activities.

### Justice

The King was not only the fountain of justice but also the incarnation of justice. He was the highest court of appeal. Apart from the King's court, there were other courts—civil and criminal—to decide cases. Punishments were not severe as they were in the days of the Maurya period.

### Army

Most of the features of the Maurya army administration were found in the Gupta system also. The army consisted of the traditional four divisions of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. But the use of chariots was fast falling into disuse. The Gupta rulers also possessed a navy. There was a war office under the direct management of the rulers corresponding to the Commissariat and transport department of the Maurya period. Apart from the war office, there existed a well-organised war-council.

### Provincial, District and Village administration

For the sake of administrative convenience, the *Desa* or Empire was divided into a number of provinces called *Bhuktis*. The provinces were sub-divided into districts called *Vishayas* or *Mandalas*. The lowest administrative unit was the *Grama*. Each province was under the charge of an officer called *Uparika*. The *Vishayapati* was in charge of the *Vishaya* or district. The *Uparika* and *Vishayapati* were assisted by a band of officers to carry on the day-to-day administration. The *Gramika* was the head of the *Grama* where the traditional form of Government prevailed.

### City Administration

The cities in the Gupta empire formed an important unit of local

administration. The administration of the city was carried on by a council called the *Parishad.* Pataliputra, Ujjain, Ayodhya, Dasapura, Girinagara, *etc.*, were the important cities. The head of the city was called the *Purapala* or *Nagara Rakshaka.* The *Parishad* headed by the *Purapala* looked after the conveniences of the people.

### Conclusion

The highlights of the Gupta system of administration were organisation, efficiency, a humane and benevolent penal code, efficient administration of the army, the exalted and prominent position given to the council of ministers, city administration on advanced lines and above all a welfare-oriented administration. It definitely marked an improvement on that of the Maurya system. The Gupta administrative system formed the basis for administrative systems of many kingdoms.

## 8. GOLDEN AGE OF THE GUPTAS

The two hundred years of Gupta rule form one of the most important periods in the history of India. It is often called the "Golden Age of Indian History" and is often compared with the "Periclean Age" of Greek History, the "Augustan Age" of Roman History and the "Elizabethan Age" of English history. The Gupta period is called by some scholars as a period of Renaissance or Rebirth of culture. The term "Renaissance" is misleading. Even in the Maurya and Kushan periods which formed a fitting prelude to the outburst of culture in the Gupta period, there was no cultural stagnation. On the contrary, there was a continuous and regular outpour of culture even during those periods. Probably the culture might have been in its budding stage during those periods and blossomed forth with dazzling brilliance in the Gupta period. Therefore, the Gupta period can at best be considered as one of "Florescence rather than Renaissance". From the point of view of administration, economic condition, the three allied arts of architecture, sculpture and painting, religion, literature and science, the Gupta period was a glorious era in Indian history and richly deserves the epithet "Golden Age" or "Classical Age".

### Administration and economic condition

The Gupta rulers inherited the Maurya system of administration and improved and perfected it by removing its harsh features and introducing new changes. The *Pax Romana* gave peace and prosperity to the Romans during the rule of the mighty Caesars. The peace ensured an orderly form of government and resulted in fuller and freer

expression of the creative talents of the people in art, architecture and literature. Similarly the *Pax Gupta* or the Guptan peace of the rulers paved the way for the brilliant productions in fine arts. The Gupta period was an age of prosperity and plenty. Trade and commerce grew under the fostering care of the Kings. The inclusion of Western India in the Gupta empire opened up new avenues for greater cultural and commercial contact with the Roman empire. Civilisation really means the art of living in cities. By developing cities like Pataliputra, Ujjain, Ayodhya, Dasapura and Girinagara, the Gupta rulers gave ample opportunity to the people to give expression to their creative talents. It was during the reign of Chandra-gupta II that the famous Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien visited India. His accounts indicate the material prosperity of the people. According to him, the people were rich and prosperous and vied with one another in the practices of righteousness and benevolence.

## Architecture

According to Vincent Smith, the three allied arts of architecture, sculpture and painting attained an extraordinarily high point of achievement during the Gupta period. But the vagaries of the climate and the Hun and Muslim invasions had destroyed some of the specimens of architecture. It is from the remaining specimens that we have to construct an accurate idea about the architectural excellence of the period. The architecture of the period falls under two categories—the cave architecture and temple architecture. The rock-cut architecture of the period can be found at Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad and the Bagh caves in Madhya Bharat. All the rock-cut caves are really romances in stone. The temples at Sanchi, Tigawa and Eran, the Nachna-Kuthara temple dedicated to Parvathi at Ajaigarh, the Bhumara temple dedicated to Siva at the former Nagod State and the famous Dasavatara temple at Deogarh are some of the best specimens of temple architecture. Many stupas and monasteries were also built during the Gupta period. The Mirpur Khas stupa in Sind and the Dharmak stupa at Sarnath are the two best specimens of the stupas of this period.

## Sculpture

The art of sculpture reached an extraordinarily high level of excellence under the Guptas. Gupta art is remarkable for its freshness and vitality. Vincent Smith says, "Gupta art is Hindu art at its best". In the Gandhara School of art, the Greek influence was predominant. But the essence of the Gupta art was the reassertion of the Indian

traditions. Benaras, Pataliputra and Mathura were the chief centres of art. Beautiful images of the Buddha, Siva and Vishnu were produced during this period. The seated Buddha of Sarnath, the standing Buddha in the Mathura museum and the copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj are the best specimens of the sculpture of the period. According to Codrington, "Gupta art has been praised for its intellectuality. It would be better to treat it as the natural outcome of ancient Indian art, with its vivid appreciation of form and pattern, and its love of the quick beat and the rhythm of living things and of their poise and balance in repose".

## Painting

The art of painting reached a high degree of perfection during the Gupta period. The fine paintings on the Ajanta caves, the Bagh caves and the Sittannavasal temple in Pudukottai speak volumes of the first-rate painting of the period. The Ajanta frescoes heralded a classical age of Hindu art in all its matchless and surpassing glory. Paintings of the "Dying Princess" and "The mother and the child" have won world-wide admiration. In the words of Nehru, "Ajanta takes one back into some distant dream-like and yet very real world. We find a whole procession of people moving through the ages. We thus get an excellent picture of the life of the people in the Gupta period". In the words of Humayun Kabir, "Forgotten in the caves of Ajanta are precious achievements which preserve the memory of an attempt to paint in timelessness. These frescoes are the aesthetic expression of a culture which grew out of the synthesis and the experience of many races and imply a balance between opposing tendencies".

## Religion

The Gupta age was a period of Hindu Renaissance. Buddhism also flourished in the country. But Hinduism was the most important religion. Though the Gupta Kings patronised Hinduism, they followed a policy of religious toleration in a land of different faiths. The period also witnessed the evolution of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Dharmasastras in their modern forms. The Bhagavat Gita was incorporated in the Mahabharata during this period.

## Literature

The Gupta era is the classic period of Sanskrit literature. Classical Sanskrit reached its perfection through the quill of Kalidasa. Scholars are not agreed regarding his date. According to tradition, he was

one of the *Navaratnas* who graced the court of Vikramaditya. To him are attributed the plays "*Sakuntala*", "*Vikrama-Urvasiyam*" and "*Malavikagnimitra*". "*Sakuntala*" was undoubtedly his *magnum opus*. It deals with the love story of King Dushyanta and Sakuntala. "*Vikrama-Urvasiyam*" deals with the love of King Puruvaras with nymph Urvasi. "*Malavikagnimitra*" is a play dealing with the love story of Agnimitra and Malavika. Kalidasa also wrote two great epics, "*Raghuvamsa*" and "*Kumarasambhavam*". The first deals with the family of Rama, the epic hero and the second one with the birth of Lord Subramanya. Kalidasa also wrote two lyric poems: "*Meghaduta*" or "Cloud Messenger" dealing with the way in which a lover in Central India sends his love-message to his wife in the Himalayas through a cloud; "*Ritusamhara*" or "Cycle of Seasons" describes the seasons in verse.

Sudraka was another great poet of the age. He wrote the "*Mrichchakatika*" or "Little Clay-cart". It deals with the romance of Charudatta, a merchant of Ujjain, with Vasantasena, a rich courtesan. To Visakadatta are attributed the plays "*Mudra Rakshasa*" and "*Devichandraguptam*". The first one deals with how the Mauryas came to power after putting an end to the unpopular rule of the Nandas. "*Devichandraguptam*" is a political drama which states that Samudra-gupta had an elder son by nameRama-gupta who succeeded to the throne and Chandra-gupta II came after him. Bharavi was another poet of equal eminence. He wrote the "*Kirata Arjuniya*". The law books of Narada and Brihaspathi are considered by several scholars as products of the Gupta age. The Panchatantra is assigned to the Gupta age. It is a collection of stories having a moral and has been translated into a number of languages. In Buddhist literature, the works of Vasubandhu, Aryadeva, Asanga and Dingnaga are famous. The Jain writers were Siddhasena and Umasvathi. Vatsyayana wrote *Kamasutra* or the science of sex. The Nalanda University started by Kumara-gupta attracted scholars from other Asian countries. The Universities of Nalanda and Valabhi served as centres for the diffusion of Indian culture to other countries.

## Science

In the field of science also great progress was made in the Gupta period. Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahma-gupta were the great mathematicians and astronomers of the period. Amarasimha, the lexicographer, and Dhanvantri, the great physician, flourished during the age.

### Conclusion

The Gupta artists were capable of working metals. The statue of Buddha 7½ feet in height and the gigantic copper statue of Buddha at Nalanda about 80 feet in height are wonderful. The most celebrated of all is the iron pillar at Delhi erected by Kumara-gupta. The pillar is still free from rust. It shows their wonderful skill in metallurgy. The artistic excellence of the Gupta period also found expression in the rich variety of gold coins issued by the Gupta Kings. To quote Nehru, "What makes the Gupta times stand out however and worthy of being remembered with some pride in India is the wonderful renaissance of art and literature which they witnessed".

## 9. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD

### Social Condition

#### Caste

The beginning of the Gupta age was marked by a strong Brahmanical reaction against the onward march of Buddhism and Jainism. So the caste system began to assume more rigidity with the Brahmana class still occupying the pre-eminent position. The division of society in the preceding period on the basis of Varna (literally the colour but indicating the type of mental calibre needed to perform different functions in society) continued in the Gupta period also. Usually marriages took place within the same caste group. But sagotra marriage was not entertained. In the city, separate dwelling quarters were assigned to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. The different occupations assigned exclusively to the four different castes were not strictly adhered to as in earlier times. The Brahmanas and Kshatriyas took to the trade of the Vaisyas and Sudras and *vice versa*. This is proved by a number of authentic instances during the Gupta period. We come across authentic examples of intermarriages between the Varnas in the *anuloma* order (marriage relations of male members of the higher castes with female members of lower castes) and *pratiloma* order (marriage relations of male members of lower castes with female members of higher castes). Even for the most serious crime, the Brahmana was exempt from capital punishment.

As in the previous period, there were innumerable mixed castes. The condition of the lowest class—chandalas—was indeed pitiable. Their work included carrying unclaimed corpses and executing crimi-

nals. They were prohibited from any free movement in the city. They were to live in separate places in the outskirts of the city as it was believed that any contact with them would contaminate the whole atmosphere. Generally, they were hunters and fishermen and occasionally scavangers as well. In short, they were the full-fledged untouchables of Hindu society.

There were, however, even more rigorous rules laid down for the conduct of aboriginal tribes like Pulindas, Sabaras, Kiratas, *etc.* Literary evidence points out that they offered human flesh to their deities, kidnapped women and indulged in such nomadic and unorthodox life necessitating their being excluded from civilized social communications. There were slaves as well in the society. It would appear that necessities dictated as to who should be deemed as slaves depending upon the nature of one's degradation. It was prescribed that a Brahmana cannot be taken as a slave while other castes not excluding Kshatriyas can be enslaved. Slaves did marry, of course, the free woman marrying a slave becoming a slave herself while a slave-woman marrying a free man becoming free after bearing a child to him.

**Marriage**

Marriage customs had become settled even by the age of the Imperial Mauryas. In the Gupta period, there was a marked tendency to give away girls in marriage at a very early age. Generally, it may be presumed that she was married before she attained puberty and sometimes marriages were performed in the late teens. Though the Sutras specified wide disparity between the age of the partners, in practice, as Vatsyayana prudently points out that the difference need not exceed three or four years. Sagotra marriage was forbidden. Marriage should not be performed in haste or with women of lower varna. In fact the general thinking of the age was of a puritancial nature so much so that even *anuloma* marriages were looked down upon. Vatsyayana, an authority on marriage and love, declared that consent of the guardians and parents should be obtained as a matter of course and as far as possible this practice should be conformed to. He, however, also takes into account the possible antagonisms in certain cases from parents and offers the guidance of better marrying a girl of one's choice. The same principle has to be applied to a girl to marry a man of her own choice rather than marry one out of compulsion.

Religious festivals, social gatherings, marriages, *etc.*, were occasions when young ones could meet without eliciting much adverse comments and these were indeed made use of for arranging marriage relationships.

The girl need not be disappointed when the elders show indifference or are unable to give her away in marriage. She should be resourceful enough to discreetly attract a suitable young man. If one were to accept Vatsyayana's view on marriage, the best form would be Gandharva type where mutual love and affection are tested and proved. The literature of the age is also replete with exotic stories of love marriages as the examples of perfect marriages. Stories of Sakuntala–Dushyanta, Urvasi-Pururavas, and Vasavadatta-Udayana were very widely known and probably served as incentives for Gandharva form of marriages. As the society was neither too rigid nor too flexible, these situations were decided depending upon the peculiar circumstances of each case. It should be borne in mind, however, that female chastity was held in high esteem.

**Position of Women**

Though general learning could be acquired by women of high birth, as a rule the womenfolk which had lost its right to Vedic learning long ago never regained it. In fact even chanting of Vedic mantras in many ceremonies concerning her were forbidden. Women who developed their own intellectual powers did so of their own accord out of their thirst for knowledge as the principal gateway to knowledge was closed for them officially. Nonetheless, we have instances of women sufficiently aware of the pleasures of learning and availing themselves of the opportunities afforded thro ıgh discourses in temples or discussions on secular and theological literature by scholars. She was not a dummy in the house and did have sufficient background to understand atleast the nature of family budget and careful husbanding of resources. There were the epics and puranas to learn and their morals to be understood and digested. The ladies received special training in fine arts like music and painting and were generally cultured, accomplished and intelligent rather than painted dolls ruling over their kitchen-domain.

The ideal wife, according to Vatsyayana, should be one who should look after her husband with great care, esteem and devotion. She should be a perpetual partner in his joys and sorrows and should do everything with his permission. She should not think in terms of defying him even in small details. She should neither indulge in idle-gossiping with characterless women nor should she show slightest discourtesy to the friends and relatives of her husband. She should regard her husband's parents as very gods themselves and should not indulge in unbecoming conduct in their presence by word or action.

Her sole concern in life, in short, should be the promotion of her husband's welfare by making life a sweeter affair rather than making it bitter by adopting a recalcitrant attitude. She should be familiar with all household responsibilities not excluding the worship-methods of family deity. She should run the household economically and well within the means of her husband. Even when her husband has other wives who may be juniors or seniors to her, she should show affection and goodwill for them. She should never live away from her husband and must be faithful to him at all times. It was believed that by her *pativratya* (strict adherence to the code of a devoted wife), she could attain the highest bliss in this as well as in the next world.

A husband was permitted to remarry only when his wife was barren or bore only female children or was a stupid. In practice, however, polygamy was widely prevalent depending upon the whims of menfolk and to this the rules of Sastras appear to have had no control. In case of adultery, women were prescribed penances and were not abandoned on that ground alone.

The widow was required to observe a life of celibacy and simplicity. She was in fact encouraged to self-immolation. For those who cannot go through this self-sacrifice, a rigorous life of vows and fasts were prescribed and enforced. However, on the available evidence it may be stated that while self-immolation was not rare, it was neither a prevalent custom nor imposed upon every widow in the land. It cannot also be denied that generally they led a virtuous life eschewing comforts and luxuries and devoting themselves to the care of the family members. Re-marriage was decidedly frowned upon though instances of widows living with suitable men out of wedlock were not rare and society tolerated such practices.

**The Courtesan**

There were accomplished courtesans skilled in the art of pleasing men through various enchanting methods like singing and dancing. An enlightened courtesan was much sought after for delightful company. Her skill in singing and dancing, appreciation of literature, painting, *etc.*, drew admirable crowds into her parlour. It was not unusual for women born in the caste of courtesans to leave the same and lead a married life. Temples also maintained girls for singing, dancing and entertaining people daily and during festival times. The ganikas, as they were known, were not motivated by altruistic designs. They had their eye on the wealth and the position of the patron.

The position of women, in general, declined during this period socially though legally some rights for her were restored or recognised. The women's right to property was recognised. There was decidedly no purdah system during the period of the Great Guptas However women of higher families used the purdah when they appeared in public. Some instances like Queen Prabhavati-gupta ruling the country as Regent, indicate that altogether women's position did not deteriorate at the higher strata while in the middle and lower strata undoubtedly her position was not enviable from the standards of the early Vedic times or from the modern standards.

**Nature of general living conditions**

The Gupta Age has rightly been called the Golden Age in Hindu India. In consonance with this appraisal, we find the standard of life of the people as remarkably high. Neither social graces nor social manners were lacking and foreign observers are struck by the orderly life everywhere. The royalty led the society in the matter of social customs and life and "clubs, umbrellas, elephant-goads, canes, bows, canopies, halberds, standards" were used to indicate regal authority. The Kings lived in palatial mansions and did not grudge huge maintenance for establishment. The royalty and the nobility sported rich dresses, costly jewelleries, imposing buildings, splendid paraphernalia and fashionable living. They relished the changes in the seasons and changed their dresses and hobbies in tune with the varying seasons. They did not frown at the pleasures of life. Silk, muslin, linen, wool, *etc.*, were freely used. Occasions like royal coronations were marked for exhibiting great splendour and wealth. Pomp and pageantry were not shunned and indeed were loved as they served the twin purpose of exhibiting one's riches and overawing the enemy. People believed in clean hygienic conditions and great attention was paid to cleanliness everywhere. They were familiar with various types of perfumes and scents and added flavour to life by liberal use of sandal *etc.* The food of the people consisted of rice, wheat, barley, pulses, butter, oil, sugar, *etc.* Wine was not disfavoured and even queens are described in the literature as connoisseurs of elixir. Soft and intoxicating drinks were quite common though excessive drinking was always condemned. Meat-eating was fairly common except to the Brahmins and the castes that voluntarily renounced meat.

City-life was well-developed and the sophistications of city life were fully developed. Vatsyayana describes in detail the life of a dandy,

though by courtesy we can term it as the life of a well-bred man. Finer aspects of life were well-cultivated and both physical and mental make-up were suitably looked after. Drinking parties, social gatherings, garden parties, entertainments, amusements, *etc.*, were not lacking to stimulate the city gentleman. He exhibits a cultured outlook and sports a man-of-the-world attitude in all his transactions.

One may add by way of conclusion that urban life was fully developed and appreciated and this led to the over-all prosperity of the people. As U. N. Ghoshal observes: "whatever was done to beautify the body and the soul during this period was raised to the standard of *lalitakala* or fine art in which simplicity, delicacy, refinement and elegance were the main watchwords".

## Economic Condition

The progress attained by the people in the fields of agriculture, industry, trade and commerce during the early period was carefully preserved and expanded during the time of the Great Guptas. The prelude to general prosperity was made possible by the cohesion in the administration that had been brought under the single sway of the Imperial Guptas. An orderly and regulated administration goes a long way to ameliorate the lot of the people and the Gupta period brought out the latent talent of the people in developing skills in various arts and crafts thereby contributing much to the general welfare and economic prosperity besides bringing a contentment hitherto unknown in the annals of Indian history.

Agriculture, of course, was the mainstay of the economic life and the state greatly cared for this wealth. Though Indian agricultural operations have been a gamble on the monsoon from time immemorial, the ancient rulers did not neglect the construction of lakes or digging canals for increasing agricultural output through irrigational facilities. The Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skanda-gupta refers to "restoration" of Sudarsana Lake. Agricultural implements were the plough, the harrow, the hoe and the sickle. A number of crops were known and the principal crops were paddy, wheat, barley, peas, lentils, oil-seeds, *etc.* Sugar-cane crop was known. Advice to the farmers on soil-care, spacing the trees, preventing plant-diseases were prescribed and practised. Herbs and flower plants were given especial attention for medicinal and aesthetic value. Strict penalties were imposed on those tampering with agricultural operations or damaging agricultural implements. Neglect of cultivation, too, was fined.

Textile industry reached its high water-mark during this period. Utilitarian as well as glittering clothing materials of cotton, linen, silk, wool, and bark of trees were woven and used much to the envy and admiration of even foreigners. The art of dyeing clothes was well-known and artistically cultivated.

Leather industry was well-developed and patronised. Leather containers, shoes, bags, *etc.*, were used by the people. Metals like copper, tin, gold, and silver were freely made use of and immense statues or columns in copper and iron of the period testify to the excellent heights reached by the people in the metallurgical sphere. Jewellery was in profusion and the goldsmith vied with ivory-craftsmen in carving out exquisite designs to suit different pockets and tastes. Pearls were available in fantastic quantities and the craftsmen dealing with pearls and precious stones enriched this art of the times. He cultivated his profession with artistic ardour and his passion for precision and beauty has earned for him the immortal praise in the succeeding ages.

Internal and international trade developed with a stable government and it was possible for people in any part of the country to obtain desired objects from any quarter of the then known world. This was a remarkable achievement made possible by the maritime efficiency and commercial enterprise of a high order. Textiles, spices, ornaments of all categories and cosmetic items were in great demand in foreign markets. Along with capitalistic methods of production, the age-old domestic method also prevailed in the country. Rules regarding mutual relation of labour and capital were laid down. Rules regarding loans on usurious terms were also laid down. Guilds and partnerships were two important economic organisations which functioned in the country.

A perusal of the economic condition of the people leaves no doubt about the prosperity of the people and their willingness to produce and consume fine varieties of all-conceivable articles that could be obtained, manufactured and consumed. The affluence of the people must have given enough incentive for the production of various essential and luxury items. The material culture of the people was well-developed. Herein lay the prosperity of the people—a propensity to consume and produce fine articles. The prevalence of peace and prosperity led to brilliant productions in architecture, sculpture and painting.

## 10. THE DOWNFALL OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE

### 1. Overcentralisation and vast extent of the empire

Overcentralisation was the characteristic feature of the government of the Guptas. The Emperor combined in his person all powers. With the passage of time, the extent of the Empire reached its saturation point. The evils of overcentralisation ate into the very vitals of the empire. Overdose of work brought senselessness at the centre and paralysis at the extremities. Under weak rulers, the evils became fully manifest.

### 2. Provincial insubordination

When the empire became unwieldy, the later Gupta Emperors were not able to exercise any effective control over the provinces. Misgovernment of the provinces became the order of the day. As the Emperor was haunted by the menace of the provincial revolts and the shadow of the domestic traitors, he was not able to exert himself fully in the government of the country. When things went out of control one province after another severed its connection with the centre. Kathiawar and Western Malwa were the first two provinces to go out of the control of the Guptas.

### 3. Rise of new powers

Pushyamitras, a tribe inhabiting the Narbada valley, rose to power during the rule of Kumara-gupta I. The Gupta empire received a rude shock from the Pushyamitras when the latter overpowered the imperial forces. Though Skanda-gupta defeated them, it became a prelude to a series of outbursts against the imperialism of the Guptas. The Maitrakas of Valabhi asserted their independence. Yasodharman proclaimed his independence at Mandasor. The Maukharis carved out an independent kingdom in the Upper Gangetic valley. The Gaudas proclaimed their independence in Bengal. Surrounded by such hostile powers, the decline of the empire was only a foregone conclusion.

### 4. Hun invasion

The Huns frequently made inroads into the Gupta territories. The Huns under Toramana and Mihiragula established their authority in Malwa by about 500 A. D. Though the Huns were defeated by Skanda-gupta and Baladitya, the menace became irresistible during the rule of the later Guptas. The Huns succeeded in extending their authority to the Punjab, Rajputana and Sind at the expense of the

Gupta empire. The stunning blows given by the Huns to the tottering empire finally proved fatal.

### 5. Bad Administration

With the passage of time, the administrative machinery became corrupt and inefficient. The tone and morale of the administrative personnel deteriorated under weak rulers. The deterioration of the administrative machinery at the centre had its pernicious effect on the provinces also. The edifice of the empire began to crumble down when the administrative machinery became rotten and corrupt.

### 6. Weak successors

Skanda-gupta was the last great ruler of the dynasty. His successors with the exception of Baladitya were thoroughly incompetent. Everything went on well as long as strong and capable rulers were at the helm of affairs. As soon as the strong hand was removed, the inevitable decline of the empire started. The dynasty ceased to produce supermen after Skanda-gupta. His successors were thoroughly incompetent to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of the State. Their corrupt and inefficient administration drivelled the country into the dotage of decay.

### 7. Effects of Buddhism

The last three Gupta rulers embraced the Buddhist faith. The pacific policies adopted by the rulers led to the disappearance of the martial spirit in the soldiers. When the Huns and other powers rose against the Guptas, the army fell an easy prey to the onward march of the aggressors.

### 8. The division of the empire

After the death of Budha-gupta, the empire was divided into small divisions among the princes of royal blood. They vied with one another to assert their supremacy. The division of the empire provided excellent opportunities for adventurers like the Huns and opportunists like Yasodharman of Mandasor to fish in troubled waters.

## 11. THE HUN INVASION OF INDIA

The Hun invasion of India during the last days of the Gupta rule was a memorable episode in the history of India. The Huns were a set of barbarians who originally belonged to Central Asia. In the beginning of the second century B. C., they quarrelled with another noma-

dic tribe called the Yue-chi. They compelled the Yue-chi to start their tribal movements. They drove out the Sakas towards Bactria, Parthia and finally to India in the first century B. C. The Yue-chi also migrated westwards. A branch of the Yue-chi known as the Kushans established their authority in India in the latter half of the first century A. D. The Huns also started their migration westwards getting divided into two sections in the 5th century A. D One section poured over Europe and brought about the downfall of the mighty Roman empire. The other section called the White Huns came and settled in the Oxus valley. From there, the Huns started extending their authority towards Persia and India. One section crossed the Hindukush and occupied Gandhara. Bnt their onward march towards Indian territory was arrested by Skanda-gupta who beat back the Huns about 460 A. D. But the Huns, however, succeeded in spreading their sway over Persia and killed the Persian King in 484 A. D.

### Toramana

The crushing defeat which the Huns suffered at the hands of Skanda-gupta was only a temporary setback. Soon they recovered under their leader Toramana. He entered India and established his authority in Malwa by about 500 A. D. and assumed the title of *Maha-rajadhiraja* He conquered a large part of Western India and wrested a large portion of the western provinces of the Gupta empire. He ruled over an extensive empire with Balkh as the capital.

### Mihiragula

Toramana was succeeded by Mihiragula in 515 A D. He was a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant. He ruled over an extensive empire with Sialkot as the capital. According to the testimony given by Kalhana's Rajatarangini—the Kashmir Chronicle—Mihiragula ruled over both Kashmir and Gandhara and conquered Southern India and Ceylon. The atrocities perpetrated by Mihiragula as mentioned in the Rajata-rangini agree with those mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang. Sung-yun, the Chinese ambassadar to the court of the Hun King of Gandhara in 520 A D gives a fair account of the position and power of the Huns. From the writings of the Greek navigator Cosmos, we come to know that the eastern boundary of the Hun empire was the Indus. It is a matter of historical importance that the accounts of the Chinese ambassador and the Greek navigator place the Hun kingdom proper to the west of the Indus.

Mihiragula persecuted the Buddhists. But his cruel deeds did not

go unanswered. He was defeated by Yasodharman of Mandasor. Baladitya, the Gupta king, also defeated him, took him prisoner and later on set him free. In spite of the defeat of the Huns, the fact remains that they contributed to the weakening of the Gupta empire after the reign of Budha-gupta. The central authority of the Huns was shaken beyond recovery by the deadly blows given to them by the combined forces of the Turks and the Persians between 563 and 567 A. D. When the root of the Hun power was irretrievably mauled, the branches in India fell as a matter of course.

### Effects of the Hun invasion

In the words of Dr. Smith: "The Hunnic invasion constitutes a turning point in the history of Northern and Western India both political and social". In the political sphere, they weakened the Gupta empire and thus paved the way for the rise of a number of independent kingdoms. The persecution of the Buddhists along with other atrocities perpetrated by the Huns produced insecurity in the country and danger to the life and property of the people. In the social field, the Hun invasion affected the social structure to some extent. The Huns soon got Hinduised and that led to the rise of many warlike Rajput tribes.

## 12. THE VAKATAKAS

The Vakatakas of Berar played a notable part in the fields of politics and culture of the 4th and 5th centuries A. D. They came to power after the fall of the Satavahanas and also when the hold of the Western Saka Satraps was fast losing its ground. The Vakatakas were the contemporaries of the Imperial Guptas. The Vakataka dynasty was founded by Vindhyasakti in the last quarter of the third century A. D. His capital was Chanaka. He was succeeded by his son Pravarasena I (280–340 A. D.). He was the first great ruler of the Vakataka dynasty. He made extensive conquests and extended his empire from Bundelkhand in the north to the Hyderabad state in the south. He performed many sacrifices including four horse–sacrifices. He assumed the title of *Samrat*. He transferred his capital from Chanaka to Purika. He was succeeded by his grandson Rudrasena I (340–365 A. D.). As he was on friendly terms with Samudra-gupta, the latter's conquest of *Aryavarta* did not affect him. Rudrasena I was succeeded by his son Prithvisena I (365-390 A. D.) He captured Kuntala. He got his son Rudrasena II married to Prabhavati-gupta, the daughter of Chandra-gupta II Vikramaditya.

Rudrasena II (390-395 A. D.) who ruled for only five years met with a premature death. The widowed queen Prabhavati acted as regent for her minor sons Divakarasena and Damodarasena in succession till 410 A. D. After a short reign, Divakarasena was succeeded by his brother, Damodarasena, who then assumed the title of Pravarasena II (410 445 A. D.). He was essentially a man of peace much given to arts and letters. He composed the prakrit poem *Setubandha*. He transferred his capital to Pravarapura. He was a Vaishnavite. Pravarasena II was succeeded by his son Narendrasena (445-465 A. D.). He married the daughter of the Kadamba King Kakusthavarman. His commands were obeyed by the kings of Kosala, Mekala and Malava. Prithvisena II (465-480 A. D.), the son and successor of Narendrasena restored the fallen fortunes of his family twice. In 480, the main branch of the Vakatakas came to an end.

Another branch of the Vakatakas was set up by Sarvasena with Vatsagulma as the capital. The other rulers of the dynasty were Vindhyasena or Vindhyasakti II, Pravarasena II, a minor son of Pravarasena II and Harisena. Harisena (480-515 A.D.) was the greatest ruler of this line. After the death of Prithvisena II of the main line in 480 A.D., Harisena inherited that kingdom as well. He conquered Kosala, Kalinga, Avanti, Kuntala (territories of the Kadambas), Trikuta (North Konkan), Lata (Gujarat) and Andhra. He excavated some of the caves in Ajanta. No information is available with regard to the successors of Harisena. The dynasty might have come to an end in the middle of the 6th century A. D. due to the rise of new powers like the Kalachuris, Kadambas and Yasodharman of Malwa. The Chalukyas of Badami gave the final blow and overthrew the dynasty.

The Vakatakas made a unique contribution to the realm of art and letters. The *Setubandha* of Pravarasena II and *Haravijaya* of Sarvasena are priceless records. The inscriptions of the Vakatakas in Sanskrit marked an advance in Sanskrit literature. Some of the Ajanta caves with their famous fresco paintings were excavated during the rule of the Vakatakas. Sculpture also made great progress. Though the Vakataka Kings were Hindus, they were not intolerant of other faiths. They constructed many temples. If the people under the Guptas got a downpour of cultural outbursts, the people under the Vakatakas experienced a shower. The people enjoyed the blessings of peace and prosperity which enabled them to give vent to their creative talents.

CHAPTER VII

# NORTHERN INDIA AFTER THE GUPTAS

## 1. MAITRAKAS OF VALABHI

Saurashtra or Kathiawar was the first province to break away from the Gupta Empire. Bhatarka set up an independent kingdom with Valabhi as the capital about the latter half of the 5th century A. D. Some of the rulers of the dynasty were Dharasena I, Dronasimha, Dhruvasena I, Dharapatta, Guhasena, Dharasena II, Siladitya I, Dharasena III, Dhruvasena II and Dharasena IV. The first two rulers contented by calling themselves *Senapatis*. The rest of the rulers styled themselves *Maharajas*. Dharasena IV assumed the high-sounding title of *Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara* and *Chakravartin*. Dhruvasena II was the son-in-law of Harsha. The last known King of the dynasty was Siladitya VII. This information is available from copper plates. The dynasty came to an end by about 770 A. D. as a result of the conquest by the Arabs of Sind. The Maitraka rulers were great patrons of learning. Valabhi flourished as a great centre of Hinayana learning. Commerce grew under the fostering care of the Kings.

## 2. YASODHARMAN OF MALWA

Malwa was another province which broke away from the Gupta empire. Yasodharman set up an independent kingdom in Malwa with Mandasor as the capital. He defeated the Hun leader Mihiragula. The Mandasor Pillar inscription gives an account of his victory over the Huna chief Mihiragula and his other exploits. The inscription further mentions that he ruled over an extensive empire stretching from the Himalayas in the North to Mahendragiri in the South and the Brahmaputra in the East to the Arabian Sea in the west. But this was only a conventional eulogy, the historical value of which could be easily brushed aside. But he played an important part in the political field by defeating Mihiragula and by attacking the eastern territories of the Guptas. His reign bridges the gulf in imperial history between the Guptas and Harsha Vardhana of Kanauj.

## 3. THE MAUKHARIS

The Maukharis of Kanauj shook off the Gupta yoke and asserted their independence in the first half of the sixth century A. D. The

founder of the dynasty was Harivarman. The second ruler Adityavarman married the daughter of Krishna-gupta, the founder of the Later Gupta dynasty. The third ruler Isvaravarman was succeeded by Isanavarman. He defeated the Andhras, Chalukyas and the Gaudas (Bengalis). He assumed the high-sounding title of *Maharajadhiraja*. But he was defeated by Kumara-gupta, the fourth ruler of the Later Guptas. His son and successor Sarvavarman was the greatest ruler of the dynasty. He defeated Damodara-gupta and the Huns. The next two rulers were Avantivarman and Grahavarman. Grahavarman Maukhari married Rajyasri, the daughter of Prabhakara Vardhana and the sister of Harsha Vardhana in 602 A. D. Grahavarman was treacherously murdered by Deva-gupta, the Later Gupta ruler of Malwa, and Sasanka, the Gauda King of Bengal. With the death of Grahavarman, the Maukhari dynasty did not come to an end. A brother of Grahavarman carried on the government for some time. Harsha Vardhana, probably, acquired the territory after his reign.

## 4. THE LATER GUPTAS OF MALWA AND MAGADHA

The relationship of the Later Guptas with the Imperial Guptas is not definitely known. The Later Guptas like the Maukharis shook off the Imperial Gupta yoke and came to power in the first half of the 6th century A. D. The founder of the dynasty was Krishna-gupta. The next two rulers ware Harsha-gupta and Jivita-gupta. The fourth ruler Kumara-gupta defeated Isanavarman, the Maukhari King. The next ruler Damodara-gupta was defeated by Sarvavarman, the Maukhari King. The successors of Damodara-gupta were Mahasena-gupta, Madhava-gupta, Adityasena, Deva-gupta and Vishnu-gupta. Deva-gupta was responsible for the murder of Grahavarman Maukhari, the brother-in-law of Harsha. The last known ruler of the dynasty was Jivita-gupta II. The power of the Later Guptas came to an end in or shortly before the second quarter of the 8th century A. D.

CHAPTER VIII

# HARSHA VARDHANA (A. D. 606-647)

## Sources of information

The two main sources of information for the study of Harsha are the *Harsha Charitha* of Bana and the travel accounts of the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang. Inscriptions throw some light. Numismatic evidence is very little. Tibetan and Chinese sources throw some light towards the closing years of his reign. Though Bana in his *Harsha Charitha* was given to flattery and exaggeration, he never distorted truth. So the historical importance of his work cannot be undermined. The *Harsha Charitha* deals with the family of Thaneswar, the early life of Harsha, the rescue of his sister Rajyasri, his conquests and his grim resolve to become a Buddhist ascetic. Further, it throws a flood of light on the political and social life of the age.

The travel accounts of Hiuen-Tsang supplement those of the *Harsha Charitha.* He spent 15 years of his travel in India and out of that he spent 8 years in the empire of Harsha. He visited Kashmir, Kanauj, Nalanda, Andhradesa, Kanchi, Maharashtra and the United Provinces. His travel accounts. in the words of Dr. R. K. Mukerjee, "reads like a Gazeteer in the scope of its enquiry and its wealth of detail". His accounts throw a flood of light on Harsha, his system of administration and the political, social, economic and religious conditions of the people. Like Bana, he praises the Emperor to the skies. "His qualifications moved heaven and earth; his sense of justice was admired by the gods and men. His renown spread abroad everywhere. To describe all his conduct would be to tell again the deeds of Sudana [the hero of a Buddhist *Jataka* story]. He forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works". Though there are some shortcomings in his work, yet it is a mine-house of information.

## Early life of Harsha

The Pushyabhuti dynasty was established towards the close of the 6th century A. D. with Thaneswar as the capital. The first great King of the dynasty was Prabhakara Vardhana (583–605 A. D.). He assumed the high-sounding title of *Maharajadhiraja.* He was succeeded by his son Rajya Vardhana in 605 A. D. Grahavarman Maukhari of Kanauj married his sister Rajyasri. Deva-gupta, the King of Malwa, in close

collaboration with Sasanka, the Gauda king of Bengal brought out the murder of Grahavarman and imprisoned Rajyasri. Rajya Vardhana defeated Deva-gupta. But he was treacherously murdered by Sasanka. When the tragic news of the death of his brother reached him, Harsha was only 16 years old. With utmost reluctance he ascended the throne in 606 A. D. The two immediate tasks which Harsha had to tackle were to rescue his sister Rajyasri and take vengeance on Sasanka. He reached Malwa only to hear that she had already escaped to the Vindhya forests. With very great difficulty, Harsha rescued his sister when she was on the verge of committing suicide. As details are lacking with regard to his affairs with Sasanka, we do not know whether Harsha took severe action against him or not.

## Conquests of Harsha

Like his illustrious father, Harsha also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. He entered into an alliance with Bhaskara-varman, the King of Kamarupa, in order to put an end to the evil designs of Sasanka. Harsha might have undertaken some expeditions against him. Sasanka remained as the master of the Gauda kingdom till his death in 637 A. D. Harsha might have taken possession of his kingdom only after Sasanka's death. Within the first six years of his reign, he brought the whole of the *Aryavarta*, under his control. He led an expedition to the Deccan. But he tasted a defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, the Chalukyan prince. Harsha defeated Dhruvasena II, the Maitraka king of Valabhi. But the latter became the son-in-law of the former. He maintained cordial relations with China. In 643 A. D. he conquered Kongoda and Orissa.

## Extent of the Empire

There are two conflicting views with regard to the extent of his empire. According to R. C. Majumdar, Harsha's kingdom in the beginning comprised merely the territories of the old states of Thaneswar and Kanauj. Later on, he added some small principalities to the north and the west. It may be said to have comprised the Eastern Punjab and modern Uttar Pradesh. Towards the close of his reign, he annexed Magadha and even pushed his conquests as far as Orissa and Kongoda. It is not definitely known, however, whether the last two with the intervening territory were ever incorporated in his dominions. According to Smith, Malwa, Gujarat, Kutch and Kathiawar peninsula were included in his empire.

## Harsha and Buddhism

Prabhakara Vardhana, the father of Harsha, worshipped the Sun. Rajya Vardhana and Rajyasri were Buddhists. In the beginning, Harsha was a worshipper of Siva. The turning point in his life came towards the later part of his reign. He showed his predeliction to the Hinayana form of Buddhism. He was attracted towards Mahayanism by Hiuen-Tsang. Hiuen-Tsang gives a fair account of the religious policy of Harsha. "He caused the use of animal food to cease throughout the Five Indies, and he prohibited the taking of life under severe penalties. He erected thousands of topes (Stupas) on the banks of the Ganges, established Travellers' Rests through all his dominions, and erected Buddhist monasteries at sacred places of the Buddhists. He regularly held the Quinquennial Convocation and gave away in religious alms everything except the material of war... The King's day was divided into three periods, of which one was given up to affairs of government, and two were devoted to religious works".

## The Kanauj Assembly (643 A. D.)

Harsha convened a religious assembly at Kanuaj. It was a vast congregation attended by Kings, Scholars, Hinayanists, Mahayanists, Brahmins and Jains. Hiuen-Tsang presided over the Kanauj Assembly. He started the work by giving a clear exposition of the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The conference lasted for 23 days. After the end of the assembly, a grand procession was held with Hiuen-Tsang seated on an elephant-back.

## The Allahabad Conference (643 A. D.)

Harsha convened another conference at Allahabad to celebrate his sixth quinquennial reign. Hiuen-Tsang attended the meeting. It was a grand occasion for feasts and festivities. The images of Buddha, Sun and Siva were honoured. Harsha lavishly showered gifts on Buddhists, Brahmins, Jains and followers of other religious denominations. The conference lasted for 75 days. The royal treasury got completely depleted. He even gave away his personal belongings including his dress. "All being given away, he begged from his sister [Rajyasri] an ordinary second-hand garment, and having put it on, he paid worship to the 'Buddhas of the ten regions', and rejoiced that his treasure had been bestowed in the field of religious merit".

## Harsha's Administration

Harsha's administration was mild and benevolent. He occupied

the foremost place in the administrative machinery. He had a high sense of duty. He attended to the minute details of government. He constantly toured throughout his vast dominions. In the day-to-day administration of the country, he was assisted by a council of ministers known as *Mantri Parishad*. Lands were granted to the ministers and other high officers for their maintenance. The main source of income came from the tax on land. The share of the state was fixed at one sixth of the gross produce. A large amount of money was spent for charitable purposes. The Criminal Code was very severe as it was in the Maurya period. The army was organised on efficient lines. The army consisted of only the three divisions of infantry, cavalry and an elephant corps.

For the sake of administrative convenience, he divided the country into many provinces called *Bhuktis*. The frontier provinces were governed by viceroys or feudatories. The provinces were sub-divided into districts called *Vishayas*. The village was the lowest unit of administration in which the traditional form of government prevailed. A redeeming feature of his administration was that he took special care for the maintenance of public roads. His administrative system may be treated on a par with that of the Maurya and Gupta systems.

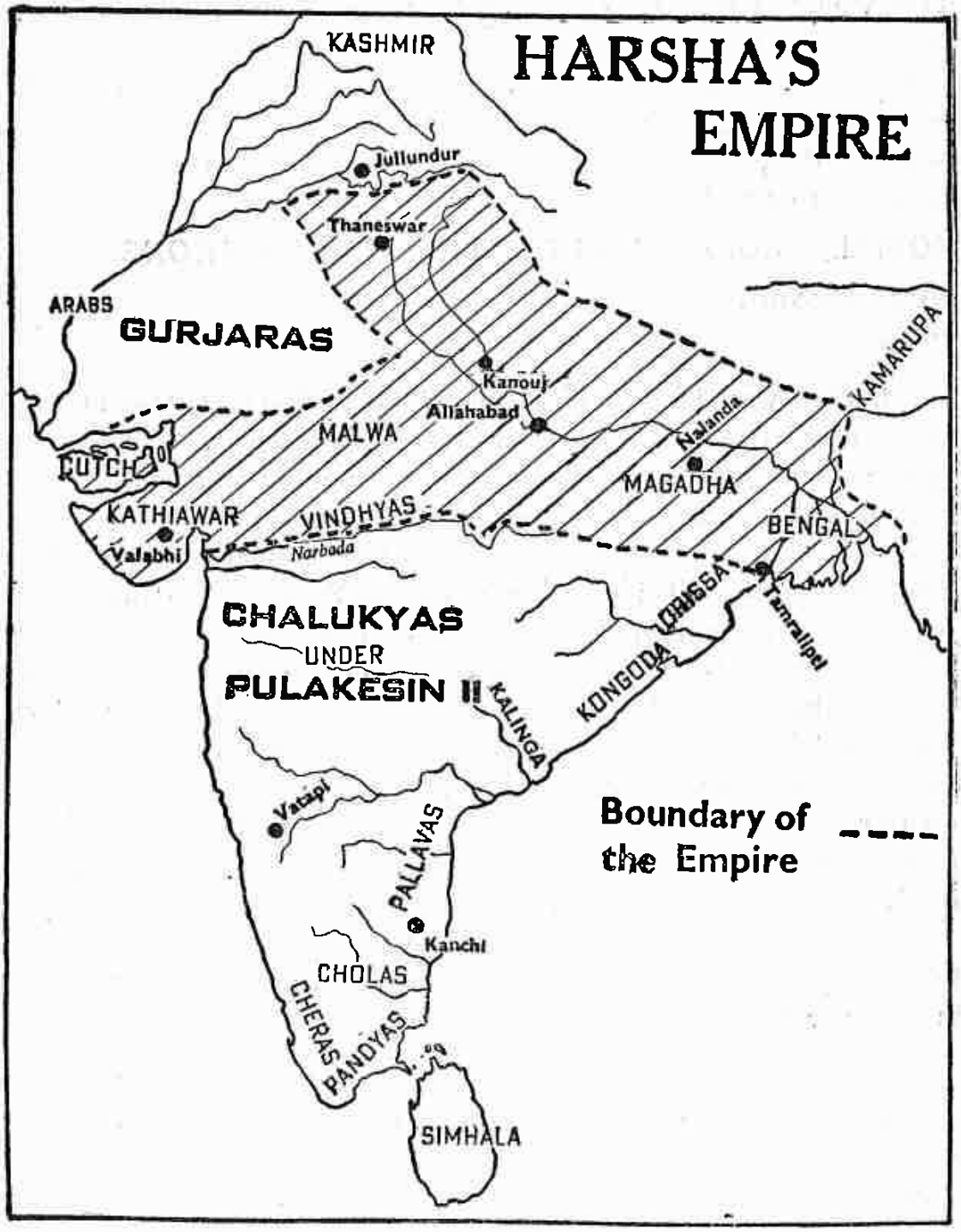
## Harsha as a patron of Art and Letters

Harsha was a great patron of art and letters. Though the artistic productions during his rule were only a few, yet they speak volumes of their richness and refinement. He beautified the city of Nalanda with many monasteries and temples. A copper statue of Buddha 8 feet in height was installed in one of the monasteries. The brick temple of Lakshmana at Supa was constructed during the rule of Harsha.

It was in the literary field that his period witnessed an outburst. Sanskrit literature made rapid strides during his period. Harsha was himself a great scholar and wrote three dramas—*Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika* and *Nagananda* in Sanskrit. He patronised men of letters. His court was adorned by literary luminaries like Bana, Mayura, Matanga, Divakara and others. The Nalanda University flourished as a great centre of learning. There were 10,000 students in the University and they studied not only Buddhist subjects but also Brahmanical works. The University was lavishly endowed by Harsha. Vikramasila, Ujjain and Valabhi were the other centres of learning. One-fourth of the royal land was reserved for granting rewards for high intellectual eminence.

## Estimate

Harsha Vardhana was undoubtedly one of the greatest Kings of ancient India. He ruled over an extensive empire with Kanauj as the capital He was not only a great conqueror but also a brilliant adminis-




trator. He won laurels not only in the feats of war but also in the arts of peace. He was a great patron of art and letters. He was himself a great poet. He undertook many welfare activities for the benefit and convenience of the people. He lavishly showered gifts and pre-

sents on Buddhists, Brahmins and Jains. His munificence has no parallel in the history of any other monarch. He rendered glorious and meritorious services for the cause of Buddhism. He richly deserves much more than Kanishka, the epithet "Second Asoka". According to Rawlinson, "Harsha was a remarkable man and stands beside Asoka and Akbar among the greatest rulers that India has produced. Soldier and administrator, unwearied in his efforts for the good of his subjects, pious and merciful, a patron of literature and himself a poet and dramatist of distinction, he stands forth on the page of history, a bright and fascinating figure".

## SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

### Social condition

#### Caste

Society was classified under the old four-fold caste system though the number of mixed castes had increased enormously. Usually marriages took place within the same caste group. But *sagotra* marriage was not entertained. Instances of *anuloma* marriage were not uncommon. The Brahmanas continued to occupy an honoured and exalted place in society. Their strict adherence to Sastric injunctions earned for them the encomium of Hiuen-Tsang. The Brahmanas and Kshatriyas alike, according to the Chinese Traveller, led a simple and frugal life and the Vaisya class by virtue of increased wealth led an elegant and rich life There were separate streets for different communities. Certain professionals like butchers, fishermen and scavangers were quartered outside the city limits with severe restrictions on their movement even during daytime. Society did not rigidly apply restrictions on the nature of the profession one could choose. Thus though birth determined caste, to some extent the inclination of the individual to follow a profession was not restricted. There were slaves as well in the society.

#### Marriage and Position of Women

Early marriage of girls had become the order of the day. Widow remarriage was not very much favoured during this period though occasionally such marriages did take place. Though *anuloma* marriages were looked down upon, this type of marriage was not rare. The custom of *sati* was in practice. The purdah system was followed by women of higher rank during the Gupta period. But Hiuen-Tsang remains silent with regard to such a peculiar custom, which could not

have escaped his notice. So it can be surmised that the purdah system was not generally observed during the time of Harsha

The position of women did not show any striking improvement during this period. In fact the downward trend from the later Vedic period continued without much change. While an individual woman was honoured and respected, gone were the blissful days of early Vedic period when they were equals to men in social and cultural spheres. While women were not enthusiastically associated with learning, the women in the upper strata managed to learn not only the rudiments of general education but were able to appreciate the importance of literature. The practice of polygamy was fairly common which further deteriorated the condition of women.

There were accomplished courtesans skilled in the art of pleasing men through various enchanting methods like singing and dancing. An enlightened courtesan was much sought after for delightful company. Her skill in singing and dancing, appreciation of literature, painting, *etc.*, drew admirable crowds into her parlour. It was not unusual for women born in the caste of courtesans to leave the same and lead a married life. Temples also maintained girls for singing, dancing and entertaining people daily and during festival times. The ganikas, as they were known, were not motivated by altruistic designs. They had their eye on the wealth and the position of the patron.

**Nature of general living conditions**

Hiuen-Tsang points out the simplicity and frugality of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The people on the whole led an honest life and they had a high sense of morality. People believed in clean hygienic conditions and great attention was paid to cleanliness. They lived upto the ideal that cleanliness is next to godliness. The people recognised the value of urban life as well as the grace of rural life. The buildings of the period ranged from palatial mansions to mud huts. Punishments were very severe. Chess was a popular indoor-game with the people. People on the whole led a contented life thanks to an efficient government which looked after their affairs with paternal care. The kings, nobles and rich men sported rich dresses and costly ornaments. The women bedecked themselves with ear-rings, bracelets, bangles, necklaces, *etc.* The food of the people consisted of rice, wheat, butter, sugar, vegetables, *etc.* Meat-eating was prohibited People seldom used onion and garlic.

## Economic Condition

Agriculture, of course,was the mainstay of the economic life and the state greatly cared for this wealth. Though Indian agricultural operations have been a gamble on the monsoon from time immemorial, the ancient rulers did not neglect construction of lakes or digging canals for increasing agricultural output through irrigational facilities. As the taxes were light, the peasants did not feel the burden of taxation. The textile industry should have flourished well during this time. From the *Harsha Charitha*, we are able to know that garments of linen, cotton, silk, wool, *etc.*, were displayed during Princess Rajyasri's wedding. This is corroborated by Hiuen-Tsang's account about the clothing materials used by the people. The metal industry also flourished in the country. The art of jewellery was well-developed and the goldsmith carved out exquisite designs to suit different pockets and tastes. Great progress was achieved in the fields of architecture and sculpture. Internal and international trade developed to a great extent. The industrial activities hinged on the castes and guilds. Barter system was prevalent at that time. According to the testimony of Hiuen-Tsang not only gold and silver were used as coins but also cowries and small pearls.

## Religious Condition

This period is notable for the great religious toleration of Harsha and the triumph of Mahayana sect of Buddhism. Harsha, however, had imbibed a catholic outlook partly due to the family influence and partly due to his own breadth of vision. He worshipped Sun, Siva and Buddha but probably showed an inclination to accept Buddhist doctrines in the metaphysical realm. His patronage of Hiuen-Tsang led to the fast growth of Mahayana form of worship. The Chinese scholar was a favourite of the Emperor. He presided over the Kanauj Assembly. It was convened to strengthen the Mahayana sect and to that end it was largely a success. The Chinese philosopher was taken in a grand procession and the royal favour did much to this success.

Harsha was a great scholar who patronised men of letters without any distinction of caste or religion. His munificent nature enabled many centres of learning to flourish and propagate the values of education. Liberal grants enabled the scholars to pursue studies comfortably. The Nalanda University flourished as a great centre of learning. Not only the young men from all parts of India clustered around this temple of learning but its fame attracted huge crowds from

many foreign lands as well. In this University, Buddhist subjects as well as Brahmanical works were taught. The University was lavishly endowed by Harsha. Some of the outstanding teachers of the University were Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Anga, Silabhadra, Vasubandhu, Dharmapala, Chandrapala, Jinamitra, *etc.* Vikramasila, Ujjain and Valabhi were the other centres of learning.

In his patronage to the Buddhist religion and learning, Harsha did not neglect Hindu faith or Hindu scholars. He treated the Hindu scholars in the same generous manner as he treated the Buddhist monks. When he liberally donated all his wordly belongings once in five years, there was no grouse for any section of the people on grounds of neglect or indifference. His compassion knew no bounds and prescribed no frontiers. The decline of Buddhism which was an established fact eversince the reaction of the Brahmanas during the Gupta period, was arrested for a while by the propping support of Harsha. Jainism also was waning but during the period of Harsha on account of a spirit of accommodation all religions alike were practised without let or hindrance though Buddhism received the undoubted state patronage. But he showed no discourtesy or disrespect to other religious values. His deep scholarship and piety gave him an inner vision which saw harmony in all religious beliefs though personal preference led him to seek Buddhist doctrines.

CHAPTER IX

# NORTHERN INDIA AFTER HARSHA

## 1. THE LATER GUPTAS OF MALWA AND MAGADHA

After the death of Harsha in 647 A. D, the empire began to disintegrate. A number of independent kingdoms arose on the debris of his empire. Madhava-gupta, the son of Mahasena-gupta, was a contemporary of Harsha. Deva-gupta of the Later Guptas was responsible for the murder of Grahavarman Maukhari. The last-known ruler of the dynasty was Jivita-gupta II. It seems quite probable that the Later Guptas ruled over Malwa first and after the death of Harsha, they held sway in Magadha also. The power of the Later Guptas came to an end in or shortly before the second quarter of the 8th century A. D.

## 2. YASOVARMAN OF KANAUJ

The history of Kanauj for nearly a century after the death of Harsha is shrouded in obscurity. The darkness disappears with the accession of Yasovarman to the throne of Kanauj. His reign-period may be assigned between 700 and 740 A. D. He was a great conqueror. The *Gauda-Vaho* or 'Slaying of the King of Gauda' a Prakrit poem written by the court-poet Vakpatiraja gives an account of the *Digvijaya* of Yasovarman. Though the main theme of the poem is the slaying of the King of Gauda or Bengal, it is mentioned only in a single verse towards the end of the poem. According to the narratives found in the poem, Yasovarman defeated and killed the King of Magadha. He then defeated the Vangas of Eastern and Central Bengal. Then he marched towards the Deccan and forced the King of Deccan to accept his overlordship. He then defeated the Parasikas. He then came to the Narbada and returned to headquarters through the Rajputana desert and the plain of Thaneswar. As the poem was only a conventional eulogy, the entire story need not be taken on its face value.

From inscriptions and other sources, the conquests of Yasovarman may be reconstructed. It is a known fact that the power of the Later Guptas of Magadha came to an end in or shortly before the second quarter of the 8th century A. D. So it is highly probable that Yasovarman might have defeated and killed either Jivita-gupta II, the last-

known ruler of the Later Guptas or one of his successors. The southern campaign of Yasovarman appears to be highly improbable but cannot be summarily dismissed as incredible. His victory over the Parasikas probably refers to the Arabs of Sind. As the main theme of the poem is the slaying of the Gauda King, it only stands to reason that Yasovarman defeated and killed the Gauda King of Bengal. In 731 A. D., he sent his minister Buddhasena on a diplomatic mission to China. The brilliant career of this excellent prince was cut short by the imperialistic designs of Lalitaditya, the ruler of Kashmir who defeated him.

Yasovarman was a great patron of art and letters. He was himself a great scholar. He was the reputed author of a drama, the *Ramabhyudaya*. He patronised men of letters like Vakpatiraja and Bhavabhuti. The latter wrote three plays *Mahaviracharita*, *Uttararamacharita* and *Malatimadhava*. *Uttararamacharita* was his *magnum opus*. Nothing definite is known with regard to the successors of Yasovarman. Indrayudha, one of the successors of Yasovarman, was defeated by Dharmapala of Bengal in 810 A. D. He placed his protege Chakrayudha on the throne. Chakrayudha was dethroned by Nagabhatta II in 816 A. D. and thenceforward Kanauj became the capital of the Gurjara-Pratiharas.

## 3. KASHMIR

The main sources of information for the study of Kashmir are Kalhana's "*Rajatarangini*", coins and inscriptions. Chinese and Muslim accounts supplement the main source. Kashmir formed a part of the Maurya, Kushan and Hun empires. The first-known independent dynasty Karkota or Naga was founded by Durlabha Vardhana (626–662 A D.). The other rulers of the dynasty were Durlabhaka (662–712), Chandrapida (712–720), Tarapida (720–724), Muktapida Lalitaditya (724–760) and Jayapida Vinayaditya (775–806).

Muktapida Lalitaditya was the greatest ruler of the dynasty who made Kashmir one of the strongest powers in Asia. He defeated Yasovarman of Kanauj and extended his arms to far off places. He built some Buddhist monasteries, erected stupas and constructed some temples. The temple of Martanda dedicated to Siva is a fitting monument to his fame as a great builder. Lalitaditya was succeeded by some mediocres who were not able to keep up the power and prestige of the

dynasty. Jayapida Vinayaditya (775–806 A. D.) was the last great ruler of the dynasty. He defeated Vajrayudha, one of the successors of Yasovarman of Kanauj. He was a great patron of letters. Under the weak successors of Vinayaditya, the dynasty came to an end.

The Karkota dynasty was replaced by the Utpala dynasty in the middle of the 9th century A. D. The two great rulers of the dynasty were Avantivarman (855-883 A. D.) and Sankaravarman (883–902 A. D.). Under the weak successors of Sankaravarman, the dynasty began to decline. Kashmir retained its independent status till 1339 A. D. when it was captured by a Muslim adventurer Shah Mirza who styled himself Shams-ud-din Shah.

### 4. NEPAL

Nepal was included in the empire of Asoka. It did not form a part of the Kushan empire. It was one of the feudatory states under Samudra-gupta. Whether Nepal formed a part of the empire of Harsha is doubtful. A Lichchhavi dynasty was established in Nepal in the 6th century A. D. In the next century, Tibet established its control over Nepal In 703 A.D. it shook off the Tibetan yoke and once again asserted its independence Many dynasties held sway over Nepal. In 1480, the kingdom was divided into four independent states. It was their mutual quarrels and dissensions that led to the Gurkha conques of Nepal in 1768 A. D.

### 5. KAMARUPA (ASSAM)

Kamarupa was an independent kingdom. It became a feudatory state for the first time under Samudra-gupta in the 4th century A. D. Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa entered into a friendly alliance with Harsha Vardhana. Various dynasties held sway over Kamarupa. Towards the close of the 13th century A. D., it was divided into two kingdoms—Kamata on the west and Ahom in the east.

### 6. BENGAL

The Gauda country, which also consisted of Western and North Western Bengal, disintegrated into five independent principalities after the death of Sasanka. Though the throne was regained by Sasanka's son, he ruled only for eight months. The confusion that prevailed in the country was taken advantage of by Harsha of Kanauj and Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa, each of whom ruled over parts of Bengal. The throne was regained by one Jayanaga. But the later history of Gauda after his death is obscure. Vanga which consisted of Eastern

and Central Bengal was ruled by Brahmana Kings in the first half of the seventh century A. D. The dynasty was replaced by a Buddhist family known as Khadga. The four rulers of the dynasty held sway during the latter half of the seventh century A. D. In the first half of the eighth century A. D., Bengal had to face some foreign invasions. Yasovarman of Kanauj defeated both the Vangas and the Gaudas in the first half of the 8th century. In the latter half of the 8th century, the Pala dynasty was ushered in Bengal by Gopala (765–769 A. D.). With the assumption of power by the Palas, anarchy came to an end in Bengal.

CHAPTER X

# THE HISTORY OF THE DECCAN

## I. THE CHALUKYAS

### THE EARLY WESTERN CHALUKYAS OF VATAPI OR BADAMI

There were three branches of the Chalukyas. They were the Western Chalukyas of Vatapi or Badami, the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. Apart from these three branches, there was the Solanki (Chalukya) branch which flourished in Gujarat from the tenth to the twelfth centuries A.D. The origin of the Chalukyas is shrouded in obscurity. It is a wild-goose-chase to locate the origin of the Chalukyas. It will suffice to say that they belonged to one of the clans of the Kshatriyas of Northern India and they might have entered the Deccan in search of position and power.

The first independent ruler of the dynasty was Pulakesin I (A D. 547-567). He carved out a small principality with capital at Vatapi or Badami. Though he did not make any extensive conquests, he performed a horse-sacrifice. Pulakesin I was succeeded by his son Kirtivarman I (A D. 567-598). He beautified the capital city with many temples and buildings. He extended his dominions by defeating the Kadambas of Banavasi, the Mauryas of Konkan and the Nalas His conquests in the far east and the far south were only tall claims. Kirtivarman I was succeeded by his brother Mangalesa (A.D. 598-608) as his son Pulakesin II was then a minor. When Pulakesin came of age, Mangalesa did not hand over the administration to him. So a civil war ensued in which Pulakesin II defeated and killed Mangalesa.

Pulakesin II (A D. 608–642) was undoubtedly the greatest ruler of the dynasty. When he ascended the throne, he was surrounded by difficulties on all sides. The civil war that ensued in the country was taken advantage of by the neighbouring Kings and feudatories He faced all opposition with great fortitude. He defeated Appayika, a neighbouring King and won over another King, Govinda by name, to his side. After getting a foothold in his country, he embarked on a career of conquest. The Aihole inscription gives a detailed account of his conquests. He captured Banavasi, the capital of the Kadambas. He compelled the Alupas of South Canara and the Gangas of Mysore to accept his overlordship. He married a Ganga princess. The Mauryas

of North Konkan who rebelled against him were forced to submit. The Latas of Southern Gujarat, the Malavas and Gurjaras tendered their submission to him. He inflicted a crushing defeat on Harsha Vardhana of Kanauj on the banks of the Narbada. He thus put an end to the imperialistic designs of Harsha to the south of the Narbada.

After consolidating his position in the west, he turned towards eastern Deccan. Southern Kosala and Kalinga submitted without offering any resistance. He then overthrew the ruling houses of Pishtapura and Vishnukundins. He defeated the Pallava King Mahendravarman I and wrested from him the province of Vengi. He crossed the Cauvery and brought under his subjection the three southern kingdoms of Chola, Kerala and Pandya. He maintained diplomatic relations with Khusru II, the Persian King.

The great conquests of Pulakesin II turned his head. His ambition soared high. He once again wanted to measure his strength with the Pallavas. But the new Pallava King Narasimhavarman I was a man of different stamp. Pulakesin II made inroads into the Pallava territory and threatened the capital. But he was defeated by the Pallava King at Manimangalam near Kanchi and also in other places. The crest-fallen Pulakesin II returned to his capital. The Pallava ruler led an expedition to Vatapi, destroyed the city and killed Pulakesin II. Narasimhavarman's title *Vatapikonda* and an inscription about the victory at Vatapi, bear testimony to the brilliant achievement of the Pallava King. With the death of Pulakesin II, the dynasty fell on evil days.

Hiuen-Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim, paid a visit to Pulakesin II in the course of his South Indian travels. The pilgrim has left a vivid description of the country. He says: "The inhabitants were proud-spirited and warlike, grateful for favours and revengeful for wrongs, self-sacrificing towards suppliants in distress and sanguinary to death with any who treated them insultingly. Their martial heroes... went into conflict intoxicated, and their war elephants were also made drunk before an engagement. Relying on the strength of his heroes and elephants, the king treated neighbouring countries with contempt..... The benevolent sway of this king reached far and wide and his vassals served him with perfect loyalty". Though the end of Pulakesin II was tragic, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest Kings of Ancient India. He assumed titles like *Prithvivallabha, Parameśvara* and *Bhattaraka*.

After the death of Pulakesin II, confusion and chaos prevailed in

the country for a period of thirteen years. The Pallavas occupied Badami and the southern districts of the Chalukya dominions. The Viceroys of the provinces adopted an independent attitude. The position was further complicated by the quarrels among the sons of Pulakesin II each aspiring to seat on the throne. Vikramaditya I (A. D. 665–680), one of the sons of Pulakesin, overcame the difficulties and revived the fallen fortunes of the dynasty. In order to avenge the death of his father and the ignominy which had befallen the family due to Pallava inroads into Chalukya territories, Vikramaditya I undertook an expedition to the south and defeated Paramesvaravarman I, the Pallava King. But Pallava inscriptions show that Paramesvaravarman I won a signal victory over Vikramaditya at Peruvalanallur near Lalgudi. The next two rulers Vinayaditya (A. D. 681–696) and Vijayaditya (696–733) continued the traditional rivalry with the Pallavas and the latter levied tribute from Paramesvaravarman II, the Pallava King.

Vijayaditya was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya II (A. D. 733–746). The traditional rivalry with the Pallavas continued in his reign also. He entered Kanchi, the Pallava capital city. Though he did not destroy the city, he defeated Nandivarman II Pallavamalla in A. D. 740. In this war, the Pallava power was mauled but not destroyed. Vikramaditya II was succeeded by his son Kirtivarman II (A. D. 746–753). He was the last ruler of this line. The Chalukya power was overthrown by Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta King.

## THE EASTERN CHALUKYAS OF VENGI

The founder of the Eastern Chalukya branch at Vengi was Vishnuvardhana, the brother of Pulakesin II, the Western Chalukya King of Vatapi. After the overthrow of the ruling houses of Pishtapura and Vishnukundins in the Eastern Deccan, Pulakesin II deputed his brother to act as Viceroy of the Andhra country extending from Vizakapatam to Nellore district. With the consent of his brother, Vishnuvardhana I (A D. 615–633) started a new dynasty at Vengi. The famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang visited the Andhra country during his reign. The Eastern Chalukyas asserted their independence after the general confusion prevailing in Vatapi after the death of Pulakesin II. Vishnuvardhana and his successors ruled the country for more than five centuries.

It was during the reign of Vijayaditya I (A. D. 746–764) that the Western Chalukya branch at Vatapi came to an end. The Rashtrakutas who brought an end to the western line played havoc in the eastern

line aslo. Vishnuvardhana IV (A. D. 764–799) remained subordinate to the Rashtrakuta King, Krishna I. Vijayaditya II (A. D. 799–843) was defeated by Govinda III, the Rashtrakuta King. Vijayaditya III (A. D. 844–888) and Bhima I (A. D. 888–918) shook off the Rashtrakuta yoke and asserted their independence. The political history of the Eastern Chalukyas was one of perpetual struggle with the Rashtrakutas. When the Rashtrakuta influence ended, it was replaced by that of the cholas. Internal dissensions brought about a division in the dynasty which in its wake brought about usurpations. Rajaraja I Chola occupied Vengi in A. D. 999 and restored the elder branch. He married his daughter to Vimaladitya (A. D. 1011–1018). The union of the two crowns—Chalukya and Chola—was brought by Kulottunga I in A. D. 1076. After the death of Vijayaditya VII (A. D. 1062–76) the Chalukya ruler, Kulottunga I deputed his sons to rule over Vengi as Viceroys.

## THE LATER WESTERN CHALUKYAS OF KALYANI

Taila II (A. D. 973–997) started the Later Western branch of the Chalukyas. He put an end to the Rashtrakuta power in 973 A. D. by expelling Karka II (Amoghavarsha IV) from the throne. His capital, in the beginning, was Manyakheta or Malkhed. He might have shifted the capital to Kalyani after A. D. 993. He defeated and killed Panchaladeva, the Ganga ruler. He succeeded in defeating Uttama Chola. But he was himself defeated no less than six times by Munja Paramara. But in the seventh expedition, he trapped and killed Munja in A. D. 995. During the reign of Satyasraya (A. D. 997–1008), Rajaraja I the Chola King sent his son Rajendra to the Chalukya territories. He ravaged the territories and mercilessly butchered many people. The next three rulers of the dynasty were Vikramaditya V (A. D. 1009–1014), Ayyana II (1014–1015) and Jayasimha II or Jagadekamalla I (A. D. 1015–42). Bhoja I Paramara defeated Jayasimha II. The Chola King Rajendra I also defeated him at Maski.

Jayasimha II was succeeded by his son Somesvara I (A. D. 1042-1068). The Chola King Rajadhiraja I ravaged the Chalukya territories thrice. In his third expedition, he defeated Somesvara I at Koppam in A. D. 1052. But Rajadhiraja I received a fatal wound and died. In the rupture with the Cholas, Somesvara I did not lose an inch of land. He defeated Bhoja I Paramara in league with the Solankis of Anhilvad, and the Kalachuris of Chedi. He later defeated Lakshmi-Karna, the Kalachuri King. Somesvara I tasted defeat at the hands of Rajen-

dra II, the Chola King at Kudal or Kudal-Sangamam.

Somesvara I was succeeded by his son Somesvara II (A. D. 1068-76). Virarajendra, the Chola King, burnt the Chalukya city of Kampili. But Somesvara II succeeded in driving out the Chola King from the country.

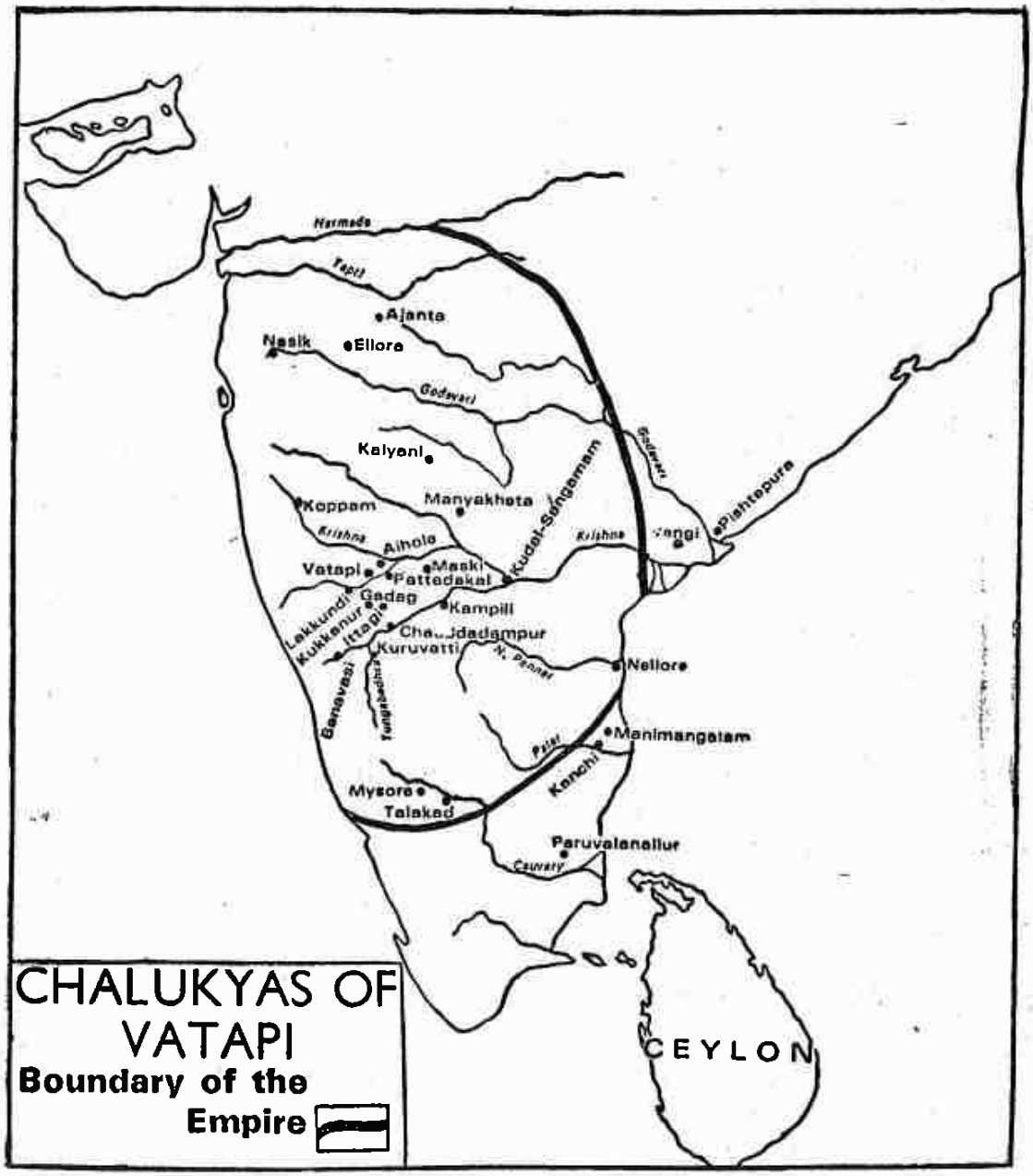
Somesvara II was succeeded by his brother Vikramaditya VI (A. D. 1076-1127). He started the Chalukya-Vikrama Era in A. D. 1076. He assumed the title of *Tribhuvanamalla*. He captured Kanchi from the Cholas. He burnt Vengi and captured it from Kulottunga Chola I. But the latter reconquered it. Vikramaditya again wrested it from Kulottunga towards the closing years of his reign. The Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra who were feudatories to the Chalukyas tried to assert their independence. But they were brought to senses by Vikramaditya VI. The Kadambas accepted his overlordship. He put down the rebellion of the Yadavas of Devagiri, one of the feudatories. He patronised men of letters like Bilhana and Vijnanesvara.

The successors of Vikramaditya VI were Somesvara III (A. D. 1127–36), Jagadekamalla II (A. D. 1136-51), Taila III (A. D. 1151-63), Jagadekamalla III (1163–1184) and Somesvara IV (A. D. 1184-1200). Though the last ruler Somesvara IV revived the fallen fortunes of the dynasty, the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra and the Yadavas of Devagiri asserted their independence and wrested large chunks of the Chalukya territories. Thus the Later Western Chalukya dynasty of Kalyani came to an end after a rule of two centuries and a quarter.

## Cultural Contribution of the Chalukyas

The plethora of battles fought during the Chalukya period never proved to be an obstacle to the cultural progress of the country. The Chalukya rulers were Brahmanical Hindus. But in keeping with the tradition of the country, they did not follow a policy of religious intolerance in a land of different faiths. The period witnessed a remarkable revival in Hindu religion. The rulers built many temples at Vatapi and Pattadakal. Jainism prospered during the period, but Buddhism was gradually declining. A Jain temple was built by a sister of Vijayaditya. Jainism was patronised by Vikramaditya II. Though Buddhism was fast losing its ground, the existence of one hundred Buddhist monasteries according to Hiuen-Tsang testifies to the fact that it had not become extinct.

Under the influence of Hindusim, Jainism and Buddhism, the creative talents of the people in literature, architecture, sculpture, painting and music reached remarkable heights. It was in the field of architecture that the Chalukyas excelled. The genesis of the growth of the Chalukyan style of architecture had to be traced to the seventh and




eighth centuries A. D. when the early Chalukyan rulers constructed temples in Aihole and Pattadakal in Dravidian as well as Indo-Aryan style. As time went on, the two styles blended together and a separate and individual Chalukyan style emerged during the rule of the Later Chalukyas. The innumerable temples constructed at Aihole,

(70 in number), Vatapi and Pattadakal speak volumes of the architectural excellence of the Chalukyas. The Ladh Khan temple, the Durga temple and Huchchimalligudi (all the three in Aihole) and the Virupaksha temple with sculptures illustrating the anecdotes from Ramayana at Pattadakal are the best specimens of the temple architecture of the earlier period. Aihole has been rightly called "the cradle of Indian Temple architecture". The rock-cut Brahmanical temples at Badami are really masterpieces of cave arichitecture. The Buddhist caves of Ajanta especially with their sculptures and paintings are really marvellous. Pulakesin II receiving a Persian embassy is painted in the Ajanta. Some of the best specimens of the sculpture of the period can be found in the Buddhist cave sculptures at Aurangabad and Nasik and the famous Ellora sculpture. Some examples are Ravana lifting Mount Kailasa, Dancing Siva and Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu.

With the close of the 8th century A. D., the creative talents of the Chalukyas in sculptural outbursts reached the stage of a stalemate. But despite this stagnation, the temples constructed under the aegis of the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani in Ittagi, Gadag and Hyderabad were decorated with sculptural works of a lesser order.

During the process of the evolution of an independent Chalukyan culture many temples were constructed. Some of the best specimens are the Kallesvara temple at Kukkanur, the Jain temple at Lakkundi, the Muktesvara temple at Chauddadampur, and the Somesvara temple at Haralhalli. The Chalukyan style reached its perfection in the 12th century A.D. The best specimens of the temple of the mature Chalukyan style are the Kasivisvesvara temple at Lakkundi, the Mahadeva temple at Ittagi, the Mallikarjuna temple at Kuruvatti and the temple of Sarasvati at Gadag.

## 2. THE RASHTRAKUTAS OF MALKHED

### Origin

The origin of the Rashtrakutas is shrouded in obscurity. But scholars have tried to unravel the mystery surrounding their origin. Several theories have been advanced to explain the origin of the Rashtrakutas. Officials designated as Rashtrakutas obviously indicating the heads of Rashtras (districts) appear in many records. According to one theory, the Rashtrakutas descended from the Yadavas of Malkhed or Manyakheta. Another theory points out that they descended from the Rathors of Rajputana. But this theory cannot be accepted because the Rashtrakutas existed much earlier than the Rathors. The

Telugu origin of the Rashtrakutas based on the word 'Reddi' which is only a corruption of the word 'Rashtra' can be summarily dismissed because such corruption is impossible in the Telugu language. An acceptable view seems to be that the Rashtrakutas were the descendants of the Rashtrikas of the Asokan inscriptions. Though the racial origin of the Rashtrakutas cannot be easily determined, on language grounds it can be safely asserted that they hailed from the Kannada-speaking region because the history of the Rashtrakutas proves that they spoke and patronised the Kannada language.

### Dantidurga (A. D. 745-756)

The Rashtrakutas were originally feudatories to the Western Chalukyas of Vatapi. Dantidurga was the brain behind the move to effect the final overthrow of the Chalukyas. After the death of Vikramaditya II, the Chalukya ruler, Dantidurga entered into a career of conquest. But he took care to see that he did not come into open conflict with the Chalukyas by making inroads into their territories. He conquered the Gurjara kingdom of Nandipuri. He captured Kanchi. But he concluded peace with Nandivarman II after giving his daughter in marriage to him. He also conquered Malwa and Eastern Madhya Pradesh. After consolidating his position, he overthrew Kirtivarman II, the last Chalukya ruler of Vatapi in 753. He was the real founder of the greatness of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. After carving out an empire, he died in 756.

### Krishna I (756-775)

Dantidurga was succeeded by his uncle (father's brother)Krishna I. He routed out the remnant of the Western Chalukya power in 760. He then defeated the Gangas of Mysore. His son Govinda wrested a large portion of the Eastern Chalukya territory from Vishnuvardhana IV. Krishna I conquered Southern Konkan. He was not only a great conqueror but also a builder. The famous rock-cut Siva temple at Ellora executed under his orders is a marvellous achievement in rock-cut temple architecture.

### Govinda II (775-780)

Krishna I was succeeded by his eldest son Govinda II. He was a man of loose morals. He left the affairs of the country to be run by his brother Dhruva who utilised the opportunity to his benefit and later on usurped the throne.

### Dhruva (780-794)

Dhruva defeated the Western Ganga King Sripurusha Mattarasa,

imprisoned the crown-prince Sivamara II and annexed the Ganga territories. He fitted out an expedition to Kanchi and defeated Dantivarman Pallava. He reduced Vishnuvardhana IV, the Eastern Chalukya ruler of Vengi, to submission. His reign witnessed the triangular contest for supremacy in northern India among the Pratiharas, Palas and his own dynasty. The city of Kanauj was coveted as the central prize by these rulers. Vatsaraja, the Pratihara King, succeeded in defeating Dharmapala of Bengal. Both Vatsaraja and Dharmapala tasted defeat at the hands of Dhruva. He nominated his third son Govinda III as the heir-apparent.

### Govinda III (794-814)

The accession of Govinda III to the throne roused the jealousy of his elder brother Stambha. He organised a rebellion against Govinda with the help of twelve neighbouring Kings. But the rebellion was put down. But Govinda III magnanimously reinstated his brother to the Western Ganga viceroyalty. Sivamara II, the Ganga prince, who had been released from prison proclaimed his independence and backed up the cause of Stambha. But he was defeated and his kingdom was declared forfeit. But Stambha was allowed to continue as the Viceroy. Govinda III led an expedition to the North and defeated Nagabhata II, the Pratihara King, and Dharmapala, the Pala King. He defeated Vijayaditya II, the Eastern Chalukya ruler of Vengi. He routed out the combined forces of the Pallava, Pandya, Kerala and Ganga rulers. According to Dr. Altekar, "Govinda III was undoubtedly the ablest of the Rashtrakuta emperors, unrivalled in courage, generalship, statesmanship and martial exploits. His invincible armies had conquered all the territories between Kanauj and Cape Comorin and Benares and Broach. Vengi was governed by a nominee of his; and the power of the Dravidian kings in the extreme south was completely broken. Even the ruler of Ceylon was terrified into submission. Never again did the prestige of the Rashtrakuta empire rise so high".

### Amoghavarsha I (814-880)

Govinda III was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha I. He was only a minor when he came to the throne. His minority was taken advantage of by the disaffected officers and feudatories and they rose in revolt. The Western Gangas asserted their independence. When the situation became uncontrollable, he even lost the throne for sometime. He, however, regained his throne before 821. After setting everything in order, he defeated Vijayaditya III of Vengi in 860. The

first twenty years of his rule witnessed an endless war with the Western Gangas. All the attacks of the Rashtrakutas were successfully repelled by the Gangas. Peace returned to both countries when Amoghavarsha I gave his daughter in marriage to a Ganga prince. He made inroads into the Pala dominions. He distinguished himself not only in the feats of war but also in the arts of peace. He founded the new city of Manyakheta and made it his capital. He patronised men of letters. His court was adorned by luminaries like Jinasena, Mahaviracharya and Sakatayana. Amoghavarsha I himself was an accomplished scholar. Though he was attracted towards Jainism, he remained at heart a Hindu and his favourite deity was Mahalakshmi. He maintained cordial relations with the Arabs of Sind and adopted an hostile attitude towards the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the Palas.

### Krishna II (880-912)

Amoghavarsha I was succeeded by his son Krishna II. He clashed with Mihira Bhoja, the Pratihara King. Vijayaditya III and Bhima I, the Chalukya rulers of Vengi, shook off the Rashtrakuta yoke and asserted their independence. Krishna II put an end to the Gujarat branch of the Rashtrakutas and brought them under his control.

### Indra III (912-917) and Amoghavarsha II (917-918)

Krishna II was succeeded by his grandson Indra III. In him the martial spirit of Dhruva and Govinda III lived again. He humbled the pride of Mahipala I, the Pratihara King and destroyed the city of Kanauj. The brilliant career of this excellent prince was suddenly cut short by his premature death in 917. Indra III was succeeded by by his son Amoghavarsha II who fell a victim to the evil designs of his younger brother Govinda IV.

### Govinda IV (918-935)

Govinda IV was a man of loose morals. He became unpopular by his tyrannical rule. When things drifted from bad to worse, the ministers and feudatories earnestly entreated Amoghavarsha III (935–939) to seize the throne. He usurped the throne with practically no difficulty. As he was of a religious bent of mind, he entrusted the administration of the kingdom to his enterprising son Krishna III. The crown-prince helped his brother-in-law, Butuga II to recover the Western Ganga throne of Talakad. He then defeated the Kalachuris of Chedi and captured Kalinjar.

### Krishna III (939-968)

Krishna III was the last great ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

Immediately after he came to the throne, he led an expedition to the south and defeated the Chola King Parantaka I at Takkolam. The crown prince Rajaditya lost his life in the battle. In his southern campaigns, Krishna III was ably assisted by his brother-in-law Butuga II. Krishna III came as far as Rameswaram and erected there a pillar of victory. He annexed Tondamandalam (the region between North and South Pennar rivers) to his empire. He is said to have defeated Siyaka II, the Paramara King of Malwa and occupied Ujjain. He interfered in the internal politics of Vengi and succeeded in putting his candidate on the throne.

## The successors of Krishna III

The successors of Krishna III were weak. They were not able to shoulder the onerous responsibilities or stem the tide of dissension and disruption. During the reign of Khottiga (968–972), Siyaka II, the Paramara ruler, attacked and plundered the Rashtrakuta capital, Malkhed. Karka II (Amoghavarsha IV) (972–973) was the last ruler of the dynasty. Taila II, who started the Later Western Chalukya branch at Kalyani, put an end to the Rashtrakuta power by expelling Karka II in 973. Thus the dynasty came to an end after a rule of nearly two centuries and a quarter.

## Administration and Culture of the Rashtrakutas

The Rashtrakuta polity was simple. Though kingship was hereditary, occasionally there were deviations from the general rule. The King was all-in-all in the administration of the country. It became an accepted practice to nominate the crown-prince. He was expected to lead military expeditions or serve as second-in-command whenever the King led expeditions. The princes of the royal family were appointed Viceroys of provinces. The king was assisted in the day-to-day administration by the ministers. The feudatory chiefs enjoyed considerable autonomy in their respective dominions. For the sake of administrative convenience, the directly administered areas by the centre were divided into *Rashtras*, and the *Rashtras* into *Vishayas*, the *Vishayas* into *Bhuktis*, and *Bhuktis* into villages. *Rashtrapati*, *Vishayapati*, *Bhogapati*, and the village headman were the respective heads of the above units. Village was the lowest unit of administration in which the traditional form of government prevailed. As most of the Rashtrakuta Kings led a warlike career, they kept the army on smooth and efficient lines. The land tax was the main source of revenue. Apart from that, revenue flowed from tributes from the vassals, mines, forests and trade.

The Rashtrakuta Kings excelled not only in the feats of war but also in the arts of peace. Hinduism was the dominant religion in the Rashtrakuta empire. Buddhism had already declined. Some of the Rashtrakuta Kings showed their partiality towards Jainism. The Rashtrakuta rulers were great patrons of learning Kannada and Sanskrit literature made great progress during the period. Amoghavarsha I was the author of a Sanskrit work, *Prasnottaramalika* and *Kavirajamarga*, a Kannada work. Amoghavarsha's spiritual guide Jinasena wrote the *Adipurana* of the Jains. Krishna II's spiritual guide, Gunabhadra wrote the *Mahapurana* of the Jains The three gems in Kannada literature—Ponna, Pampa and Ranna—flourished during this period.

Though there was not a downpour in the realm of art, the period atleast witnessed a shower. The rock-cut temples of the Rashtrakutas at Ellora and Elephanta are marvellous productions. The rock-cut temple of Kailasanatha at Ellora is the best specimen of the Dravidian style. The Kailasanatha temple, in the words of Smith is "the most marvellous architectural freak in India....., one of the wonders of the world, a work of which any might be proud and an honour to the king under whose patronage it was executed". Ravana shaking Mount Kailasa, The Descent of the Ganges, and the Dancing Siva and Vishnu and Lakshmi listening to music are the best specimens of sculpture inside the temple. In the sculptural representation of Ravana shaking Mount Kailasa, "the quivering of the mountain has been felt, and Parvati, turns to Siva and grasps his arm in fear, while her maid takes to flight, but the great God is immoved and holds all fast by pressing down his foot". Sculptured designs depicting the marriage of Siva and Parvati, and the Trimurti at Elephanta are really brilliant productions in the realm of sculpture. Five Jain shrines cut from rocks belong to this period. The Rashtrakutas maintained cordial relations with the Arabs. It gave wide scope for commercial prosperity.

In the words of Dr. Altekar: "The period of Rashtrakuta ascendancy in the Deccan from about A. D. 753 to 975 constitutes perhaps the most brilliant chapter in its history. No other ruling dynasty in the Deccan played such a dominant part in the history of India till the rise of the Marathas as an imperial power in the 18th century. No less than three of its rulers—Dhruva, Govinda III and Indra III—carried their victorious arms into the heart of North India and by inflicting severe defeats upon its most powerful ruler changed the whole course of the history of that region. Their success in the south was equally

remarkable and Krishna III literally advanced as far as Rameshvara in the course of his victorious career. All the great powers of India, the Pratiharas and the Palas in the North, and the Eastern Chalukyas and Cholas in the South, were subjugated by them at one time or another. They, no doubt, suffered reverses at times but on the whole their military campaigns against powerful adversaries were repeatedly crowned with brilliant success".

## 3. THE WESTERN GANGAS OF TALAKAD

The Western Gangas of Gangavadi which comprised a greater part of Mysore came to power in the second half of the 4th century A. D. The founder of the dynasty was Kongunivarman or Madhava I (350–400). His capital was Kolar. Madhava II (400–435) was an accomplished scholar and was well-versed in *Nitisara* (Science of Politics) and the *Upanishads*. He wrote a commentary on the *Sutra* of Dattaka, a predecessor of Vatsyayana, the celebrated author of *Kamasutra*. Harivarma (435–460) shifted the capital to Talakad near Sivasamudram. He must have been a vassal of the Pallavas. Most of the Ganga rulers were Jains. But Vishnugopa, the son and successor of Harivarma, was a Vaishnavite. Madhava III (460–500) was a staunch Saivite. He strengthened his position by marrying a Kadamba princess. Avinita (500-540) came to the throne when he was an infant. Vijayakirti, a learned Jain scholar, educated him. He showered gifts on the Jains and Brahmins.

Durvinita (540–600) maintained cordial relations with the Chalukyas, but adopted an hostile attitude towards the Pallavas. Though he was a Vaishnavite, he showered gifts on the Jains. He was an accomplished scholar in Kannada and a reputed scholar in Sanskrit. He extended his dominions at the expense of the Pallavas. The reigns of Mushkara, Srivikrama, Bhuvikrama, and Sivamara I were uneventful. Sripurusha (726–788), the grandson of Sivamara I, was the most distinguished member of the family. He won a resounding victory over the Pallavas. There was so much prosperity in the Kingdom that it came to be known as *Srirajya* (Fortunate Kingdom).

Sripurusha was succeeded by his son, Sivamara II (788-812). The invasions of Dhruva and Govinda III—the Rashtrakuta Kings—dealt a severe blow to the Gangas. They lost their independence. Attempts were made during the rule of the successors of Sivamara II to assert their independence. Rajamalla I (817–853) made a bold bid

to assert his independence. Nitimarga I (853–870) successfully repelled the attacks of the Rashtrakutas. Rajamalla II (870–907) and Butuga I maintained cordial relations with the Rashtrakutas Butuga I married the daughter of Amoghavarsha I. Nitimarga II ruled from 907 to 935. He had two sons, Rajamalla III and Butuga II. The latter married Revaka, the sister of Krishna III, the Rashtrakuta ruler. After the death of Nitimarga II, Rajamalla III came to power. Krishna III deposed Rajamalla III when he was crown-prince, and made his brother-in-law Butuga II (937–960) the ruler. In the southern campaigns of Krishna III, he was ably assisted by his brother-in-law Butuga II. Butuga played a leading role in the battle of Takkolam between the Cholas and Rashtrakutas, in which the latter won a signal victory over the former and the Chola crown-prince Rajaditya died in the battle-field Butuga II was well-versed in Jain philosophy. It was during the reign of Narasimha III (960-974) that the Rashtrakutas fell from power Rajamalla IV (974–985) was ably assisted by his Jain minister Chamunda Raya The minister built a Jain temple at Sravana Belgola and erected a statue of Gomatesvara (56½' high), "larger than any of the statues of Ramases in Egypt". During the rule of Rakkasa Ganga (985–1024), Talakad was captured by the Cholas in 1004 Even after the capture of Talakad, the Gangas continued their political existence. They served under the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra. A Ganga prince expelled a Chola ruler from Talakad in the twelfth century, and another Ganga ruler of Sivasamudram defied Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar. Almost all the Ganga rulers were benefactors of Jainism. They encouraged the development of Kannada and Sanskrit literature.

## 4 THE EASTERN GANGAS OF KALINGANAGARA

The Eastern Gangas came to power in the middle of the 8th century A. D. They ruled over Ganjam with Kalinganagara as the capital. The rulers patronised Hinduism, and their favourite deity was Gokarnesvara in Mahendragiri. The political history of the Early Eastern Gangas is shrouded in obscurity. During the rule of Vajrahasta V (1038–68), the Gangas asserted their independence and shook off the Chola yoke. Rajaraja I Ganga (1068–78) married a Chola princess. Anantavarman Chodaganga (1078–1148) was the most distinguished member of the family. Epigraphic evidence shows that he raided the territory between the Ganges and the Godavari. He built the

famous Jagannatha temple at Puri. He encouraged the development of Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The dynasty came to an end in the first quarter of the fifteenth century due to Muslim incursions.

## 5. THE KADAMBAS OF BANAVASI

The Kadamba dynasty was so called because of the kadamba tree which grew in their ancestral abode. After the decline of the Satavahana power in Kuntala (Western Deccan and Northern Mysore), the Chutus stepped into their shoes. After the decline of the Chutus, the Pallavas filled the void. When the central authority of the Pallavas became weak, the Kadambas established their power at Kuntala. The Talagunda inscription gives an account of the Brahmanical origin of the Kadamba dynasty and the circumstances leading to the establishment of the Kadamba power.

Mayuravarman (340–370) was the founder of the dynasty. He carved out an empire at the expense of the Pallavas and ruled over it with headquarters at Banavasi. The Pallavas tried their best to bring the insurgent adventurer into line. But when their attempts failed, they came to terms with him and recognised his independence. He patronised the Brahmins. Kangavarman (370–395) was defeated by Prithvisena I, the Vakataka King. The next two rulers of the dynasty were Bhagiratha (395–420) and Raghu (420–430). Kakutsthavarman (430–450) strengthened his position by marrying his daughters to Gupta and Vakataka princes. He constructed a tank for a temple dedicated to Siva at Talagunda. It attracted many pious Kings like Satakarni. During the rule of Santivarman (450–475), the empire became so extensive that it was divided into two provinces. After his death, the southern province asserted its independence under a separate branch of the dynasty. Mrigesavarman (475–490) won victories over the Gangas and Pallavas. He signalized his victory by performing a horse sacrifice. But towards the close of his rule, he became a feudatory to the Pallavas. Mandhatrivarman (490–497) was succeeded by Ravivarman (497-537). He struggled hard against his rivals and made his position secure. During the reign of Harivarman (537–547), Pulakesin I, one of the feudatories, asserted his independence and started the Early Western Chalukya dynasty at Vatapi. With Harivarman, the senior branch came to an end. The junior branch started with Krishnavarman II (547-565). The rise of the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan pushed the Kadambas to the background. But they continued their precarious

existence. The rise of Vijayanagar in the 14th century A. D. put an end to the Kadamba power.

## 6. THE YADAVAS OF DEVAGIRI

The Yadavas of Devagiri claimed their descent from the epic hero Krishna. They were also known as Sevunas because they ruled over Sevuna, the region from Nasik to Devagiri (Daulatabad). The ancestors of the Yadavas of Devagiri were vassals of the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed and the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. The first great ruler of the dynasty was Bhillama V (1187–1191). Taking advantage of the declining power of the Western Chalukyas, he wrested a large chunk of territory to the north of the Krishna from Somesvara IV. Bhillama ruled over the newly conquered territory with Devagiri as the capital. He came into clash with Ballala II, the Hoysala ruler of Dvarasamudra, and the latter defeated the former at Vadag in 1191.

Bhillama V was succeeded by his son Jaitrapala or Jaitugi (1191–1210). He defeated and killed Kakatiya Mahadeva, the ruler of Warrangal, and imprisoned his son Ganapati. Later on, he set him free and placed him on the throne of Warrangal. Singhana (1210–47), the son and successor of Jaitrapala, was the most distinguished member of the dynasty. He defeated Vira Ballala II Hoysala and extended his dominions beyond the Krishna. He invaded Gujarat many times. He annexed Kolhapur which belonged to the Silahara dynasty. He was a great patron of letters. Sarangadhara composed *Sangitaratnakara*, a treatise on music. Changadeva established a school for the study of astronomy and mathematics. Both these celebrities enjoyed the patronage of Singhana. He was succeeded by his grandson Krishna (1247–60). He kept the hard-won empire of his ancestors intact. Krishna was succeeded by his brother Mahadeva (1260–71). He annexed North Konkan and put an end to the Silahara line of Thana. He is said to have defeated the Kakatiyas and the Hoysalas.

Ramachandra (1271–1309) was the last great ruler of the dynasty. It was during his reign that Ala-ud-din Khilji, the Governor of Kara under his uncle Firuz Shah invaded Devagiri. Ramachandra was defeated and made a vassal of the Sultan of Delhi. As he failed to pay the tribute, Ala-ud-din Khilji as Sultan of Delhi deputed his able general Malik Kafur to Devagiri. When Kafur defeated Ramachandra in 1307, he accepted the overlordship of the Sultan. Sankara (1309–1312), the son of Ramachandra, fell into arrears. He was defeated and killed by Malik Kafur in 1313. Harapala, the brother-in-law of San-

kara, raised the flag of insurrection. Mubarak, the son of Ala-ud-din, led an expedition to Devagiri. He captured Harapala and flayed him alive. With his death, the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri came to an inglorious end.

## 7. THE HOYSALAS OF DVARASAMUDRA

The Hoysalas were originally the feudatories of the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. The Hoysalas claimed descent from the Yadava stock. Vinayaditya I (1006–1022) carved out a petty principality in Mysore and ruled over it with Sosavir as capital. He, however, remained a trusted vassal of the Western Chalukyas. The successors of Vinayaditya I—Nripakama (1022–47), Vinayaditya II (1047–1100), Ballala I (1100–1106), Vishnuvardhana (Bittideva) (1111–1141) and Narasimha I (1141–1173)—continued to remain feudatories to the Chalukyas. Ballala I shifted his capital from Sosavir to Belur (Velapura). Vishnuvardhana was the first distinguished member of the dynasty. He shifted his capital from Belur to Dvarasamudra. He wrested Gangavadi (Southern Mysore) from Kulottunga I Chola.

Ballala II (1173–1220) defeated Bhillama V, the Yadava ruler of Devagiri, at Vadag in 1191. He wrested a large portion of the Chalukya territories from Somesvara IV, the last Chalukya ruler of Kalyani and asserted the independence of the Hoysalas. He was the first independent ruler of the Hoysalas. Narasimha II (1220–1235) lost the territory between Krishna and Tungabhadra to Singhana, the Yadava ruler of Devagiri. But his failure against the Yadavas was made good by his successful southern campaigns directed against the Pandyas. The Hoysalas were related to the Cholas by matrimonial alliances. Maravarman Sundara Pandya I made inroads into Chola territories and Rajaraja III Chola was thrown into prison by one of his minor chieftains, Kopperunjinga. Narasimha II led an expedition to the south and came as far as Rameswaram and erected there a pillar of victory. He defeated the Pandya ruler and released and restored Rajaraja III to the throne.

Narasimha II was succeeded by his son Somesvara (1235–54). To check the aggressive activities of the Pandyas directed against the Cholas, he set up a new capital at Kannanur near Trichinopoly. After the death of Somesvara, the kingdom was partitioned between his two sons Narasimha III and Vira Ramanatha. Ramanatha who ruled over the southern part of the kingdom lost it to the Pandyas. He quarrelled with his brother and wrested from him a small portion of territory.

Ballala III (1291–1342) was the last great ruler of the dynasty. He united the two parts of the kingdom. In 1310 he was defeated by Malik Kafur, the general of Ala-ud-din Khilji. Ballala had to struggle hard against the Turkish garrisons left by Malik Kafur in important cities in South India. In one of his encounters, he fell a victim to the Madura Muslims in 1342. Ballala IV (1342 1346), the son and successor of Ballala III, continued his precarious existence till he fell fighting against the Muslims. With his death the Hoysala kingdom came to an end.

The Hoysalas paved the way for the rise of Mysore into a big kingdom. Their perseverance and their short but spirited resistance against the aggressive Muslims served as a source of inspiration to the Sangama brothers, the founders of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Hoysala rulers distinguished themselves not only in the feats of war but also in the arts of peace. They were great patrons of art and letters. They constructed a number of temples at Dvarasamudra, Belur and Somnathpur. Anecdotes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha are depicted in the temples which bear eloquent testimony to the sculptural excellence of the period. The Kings encouraged the development of Kannada literature. Nagachandra (Abhinava Pampa), Kanti, Harisvara, Raghavanka and Nemichandra were the great writers of the period.

## 8. THE KAKATIYAS OF WARRANGAL

The Kakatiyas were originally feudatories to the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. When the power of the Chalukyas began to decline, Prola II (1110-58) wrested the territory between the Krishna and Godavari from the Chalukyas and ruled over it with Anumakonda as the capital. He is said to have vanquished, imprisoned and finally liberated Taila III, the Chalukya ruler. He was succeeded by his son Prataparudra I (1158-85). He shifted the capital to Warrangal. He was succeeded by his brother Mahadeva (1185–99). Jaitugi, the Yadava ruler of Devagiri, defeated and killed Mahadeva and imprisoned his son Ganapati. Later on, he set him free and placed him on the throne of Warrangal. Ganapati (1199-1261) was undoubtedly the greatest ruler of the Kakatiyas. He wrested from the Cholas, the territories upto Kanchi. He came into clash with the Hoysalas. But he did not wrest any territory from them. Both Ganapati and Singhana claim victories over each other. Ganapati was succeeded by his daughter Rudrambha (1261-91). Peace and prosperity prevailed in the country during her

rule. She abdicated the throne in favour of her grandson Prataparudra II (1291-1323). Malik Kafur, the general of Ala-ud-din Khilji, invaded Warrangal in 1309. After offering a stiff resistance, Prataparudra II yielded. An immense booty fell into the hands of Kafur. Prataparudra II promised to pay tribute. Ulugh Khan (Mahammad-bin-Tughluq), the son of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, captured Warrangal in 1323 and sent Prataparudra II to Delhi. His successors continued their precarious existence. In 1327 Muhammad-bin-Tughluq captured Warrangal. Vinayakadeva, the last nominal ruler of the dynasty, was put to death by Muhammad Shah I, the Bahmani Sultan in 1362. After his death, the dynasty came to an end.

CHAPTER XI

# THE HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA

## 1. SANGAM AGE

### Introduction

The word "Sangam" in Sanskrit means "an association of poets". The Tamil Sangam consisting of Tamil poets which was virtually a literary academy flourished during the rule of the Pandyan Kings. The age during which the poets flourished and brought out their brilliant literary productions is known as the "Sangam Age". The word "Sangam" appears in the commentary on the *Iraiyanar Ahapporul* by Nakkirar. K. A. N. Sastri assigns the first three centuries of the Christian era to the Sangam Age. The Roman notices, the life depicted in the two epics, *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* and other corroborating evidences point out to 2nd century B. C. to 2nd century A. D. as the probable date of the Sangam Age.

### Political Condition

Tamilagam or the Tamil country of this period stretched from Vengadam (Tirupathi) in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. Traditionally the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas with well-defined territorial limits ruled over their respective kingdoms. The Cheras held sway over the south-western, the Cholas over the north-eastern, and the Pandyas over the south-eastern parts of Tamilaham. Only a few rulers of the Sangam Age stand out hazily in the mist of the period. Some of the important Chera Kings were Nedunjeral Adan, Senguttuvan, Perunjeral Irumporai and Ilanjeral Irumporai. Senguttuvan was undoubtedly the most distinguished member of the Cheras in the Sangam Age. Some of the Chola rulers were Ilanjetcenni, Karikalan and Senganan. Of these Karikalan was undoubtedly the greatest of the Chola Kings of the Sangam Age. Many legends have been woven around his fair rule. But there can be no doubt about his extraordinary ability in the art of warfare and administration. He won a decisive victory over the combined forces of the Cheras, Pandyas and some subordinate chiefs at Venni. The Pandyas had also a hoary past. Mention about the Pandyas is made even in the works of Megasthenes and Kautilya. As patrons of Tamil learning and culture, their position was even more prestigious than the other two crowned heads. Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludi, Kadalul mainta Ilamperum Valudi, Ariyap-

padai kadanda Nedunjeliyan, and Talaiyalankanattu Nedunjeliyan were some of the important Kings of the period. It was Ariyappadai kadanda Nedunjeliyan who died of agony and shock when he learnt that his hasty judgment caused the execution of Kovalan. Talaiyalankanattu Nedunjeliyan was the most distinguished member of the Pandyas in the Sangam Age. He defeated the combined forces of Irumporai (Chera King), a Chola king and five subordinate chiefs at Talaiyalankanam near Tiruvarur. Apart from the three crowned Kings, there were a number of chieftains who owed allegiance to one or other of the three crowned Kings in theory or sometimes asserted their independence in practice. Smith says that there were 120 such chieftains. Of these seven were noted for their munificence. They were Pari, Ori, Kari, Adıhaman, Pehan, Ay, and Nalli.

**Kingship**

Kingship was the common form of government in the Sangam Age. Kingship was hereditary and it was usually based on the law of primogeniture. There is no textual reference to indicate the fact that the King was ever elected. But wars of succession were not unknown. The three crowned Kings assumed a higher title called *Vendan* and the chieftains assumed a lesser title known as *Mannan.* The eldest prince, who also happened to be the heir-apparent to the throne was known by the title *Komahan* and the younger princes were known as *Ilango.* The people of the Sangam Age considered their kings equal to God under whose benign protection they slept the more quietly in their beds. The royal emblem of the Chera, Chola and Pandya kings were the bow, the tiger and the carp respectively. The paraphernalia of the king consisted of the Crown, the Sceptre, the Umbrella, the Throne, the Drum, the Sword, the Banner, the Horse, the Elephant, the Chariot, the Garland, *etc.*

**Duties of the King**

The five basic functions which the king had to perform were learning, performing sacrifices, making presents, protecting the subjects and punishing the wicked and the guilty. The king considered himself as the protector of the people. The various public utility schemes sponsored by him must have so endeared him to the people that they did not hesitate to take up arms when the kingdom was threatened. People believed in laying down even their own lives for the sake of the king. In view of the perpetual feuds among the rulers, military duties were inevitable. The skilled king arranged for appropriate military trai-

ning to able-bodied subjects. Many of the kings of the Sangam Age were men of letters. They patronised scholars and artists. Innumerable references are found in the Sangam literature about the munificence of the kings. It is this royal patronage that greatly enriched learning. The king entertained scholars from far and near. The court of the king was the best place to exhibit one's learning. Royalty did not lag behind in honouring musicians and dancers. Fine arts thus patronised were well-cultivated. The king conferred honours and titles to the people who rendered glorious and meritorious services to the country. He upheld the traditions of the land and rendered even-handed justice in most of the cases.

In the day-to-day administration of the country, the king was assisted by two bodies known as *Aimperunkulu* and *Enperayam*. The former consisted of the purohit, army chief, the ambassador, the spies and the ministers and the latter consisted of accountants, executive officials, treasury officials, palace guards, leading subjects of the king in the capital city, chiefs of the infantry, chiefs of the elephant corps and chiefs of the cavalry. These two sets of officials grouped together as five and eight were only for the sake of facility of reference. But whether they discharged any collective functions are highly doubtful. Apart from the two groups mentioned above, the king was assisted in the administration by ministers, ambassadors, spies and a host of other officials. The duties of the ministers were purely advisory. A minister was expected to advise the king suitably.

**Village and Municipal Administration**

As in early days, the village formed the lowest unit in which the traditional form of government prevailed. The village administration was in the hands of the village elders. With the slender resources, they managed their own affairs. In settling petty disputes, they wielded greater powers than the present-day panchayats. Though information is available with regard to village administration, it is not definitely known in the case of municipal administration. But it can be inferred that arrangements might have been made for the essential services. Though no system of municipal government as such existed, the bigger towns were better looked after, if they happened to be the seat of the government. In such towns there was also the watch and ward system.

**Army**

The army consisted of the traditional four divisions of infantry, elephant corps, cavalry and chariots. The navy was the fifth wing of the army which quite often rendered able side-support. The offensive weapons were *vel* (spear), *val* (sword), and *vil* and *ambu* (bow and arrow). Sometimes *kavan* (sling) was used as a destructive weapon. The defensive weapons were shields and armours. The blowing of the conch and beating of the drum signalised the beginning of warfare. The King himself was the supreme commander of the army. The wars in the Sangam Age were characterised by arson, atrocities, humiliation to the defeated, and least mercy to the prisoners of war. But in spite of these atrocities, a redeeming feature was the safety accorded to cows, Brahmins, women, children and the sick people before the beginning of the war. Death in the battle-field sustaining wounds in the chest and not on the back was considered an unique honour.

**Law and Justice**

There was no written law. Certain well-established customs and traditions which would not disrupt the prescribed social order constituted the law of the land. The King was the source of all justice. The Court of Justice in the capital city was called *avai* and in the villages *manrams*. The King presided over the *avai* and rendered justice in civil and criminal cases. In the discharge of his judicial duties, the King was assisted by counsellors collectively called the *arankuru avaiyam*. Though the King was not bound by their advice, he was ever conscious of the collective wisdom and mostly benefited by their counsel. Trial by ordeal was known. The punishments were severe and brutal and sometimes unfair too. Capital punishment was given to thieves who were caught red-handed. Kovalan was summarily executed on the alleged charge of having stolen the anklet of the Pandyan Queen. Nannan, a chieftain, ordered for the execution of a girl for having eaten a mango fruit that was drifted down the stream from the palace garden. The offence committed was interpreted as theft in this case. In both cases, the punishments were very unfair. Adultery was considered a serious crime. But professional prostitutes enjoyed a licence to lead a licentious life. The usual punishment for adultery was decapitation. Spies if caught were summarily executed. Arson, murder by poisoning, assassination, theft, robbery, looting and adultery were considered as serious crimes. Decapitation was the usual

punishment given to these offences. Torture and imprisonment or fines especially in kind or decapitation were the punishments imposed for wrongs done. The punishments varied according to the severity of the offence committed. In administering justice, the Kings sometimes rendered inequitable justice. Manu Niti Kanda Cholan had his son executed for killing a calf Manu Niti prescribes only a fine of 200 panas for that crime. But the King went a step further from Manu Niti and adhered to the Hammurabian code of "eye for an eye" or "tooth for a tooth". To quote another example, a Pandyan King by name Kulasekhara knocked at the doors of a countryside house at an unreasonable hour when a Brahmin couple inside the house was in a compromising situation. But the King did that with all good intentions suspecting foul play. When he asked his judicial counsellors about the punishment for such a crime, they replied that the offending hand should be cut off. Immediately the King cut off his hand. Prisons were also maintained and the treatment meted out to prisoners was discourteous.

**Revenue Administration**

The main source of income for the Government came from the tax on land. The share of the State was fixed at one-sixth of the gross produce. Apart from the land tax, the peasants had to pay a water-cess for agricultural purposes. Public revenue which flowed from other sources came from customs and tolls on imported and exported goods, tributes from vanquished enemies and feudatories, presents from the grateful subjects, court fines, *etc.* The main items of expenditure were the amount spent on wars, maintenance of the royal household, public works such as irrigation, patronage to poets, promotion of fine arts, maintenance of civil and military establishments, *etc.* Coins were known. Weights and measures were also known.

## Economic condition

A simple but materialistic picture is depicted about the Sangam economy. The acquisition of wealth was much sought after. Though general prosperity prevailed in the country, the awe-breathing distance between the rich and the poor as usual remained wider. While the rich rolled in luxuries, the poor felt the pinch of poverty. The philanthropic attitude adopted by the Kings along with some rich people might have reduced the pangs of hunger of a few wandering minstrels.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Periar, Palar, Pennar, Cauvery, Vaigai and Tamraparni were the important rivers

The rivers afforded great help for regular agricultural operations. The chief crops cultivated were rice and millets. Coconuts, sugarcane, plantains and cotton were also grown. As for physical existence food is the main life-sustainer, hunting and fishing operations were also carried on along with agricultural pursuits. The forests supplied timber and spices. Though agriculture was the main occupation of the people, they were not indifferent to industry. Spinning and weaving were the main industries during the period. Dyeing flourished as an ancillary industry to weaving. Textile products of a rich variety were produced out of cotton, silk, wood-fibre and wool. Blacksmithy, goldsmithy, carpentry, pearl-diving, boat-building, *etc.*, were the other avocations followed by the people. The goldsmith made ornaments of exotic designs which had great demand in foreign markets.

Such a materialistic type of people who looked at life with zeal and zest and who produced ordinary consumer goods as well as luxury goods could not have remained idle with the productions. Brisk inland trade passed on through the chief towns. Inland trade was based on the barter system. Two types of bazaars which existed in the leading cities such as Puhar and Madurai were the *Nalangadi* (morning bazaar) and the *Allangadi* (night bazaar). The merchants and wandering hawkers in general moved in groups lest they should be molested by robbers. The merchants of the Sangam Age carried on extensive trade with foreign countries also. This is amply attested by Greek texts as well as by many literary works of the Sangam period. Gold was used as the medium of exchange in foreign trade. The chief articles of export from Tamilaham were spices, pearls, ivory, silk cloth, gold ornaments, *etc.* The chief items of import were wine, sugar-candy, food-stuffs, copper, tin, lead, other consumer goods, *etc.* The chief articles sent to North India were pearls, gold, diamond and ivory. The merchant class enriched the country by their commercial activities inside the country and outside the country and ushered in an era of material prosperity.

## Social condition

The natural classification of the land into *Kurinji* (hilly), *Mullai* (pastoral), *Marudam* (agricultural), *Neidal* (coastal), and *Palai* (desert) had an important bearing on the mode of life led by the people who lived in these five different geographical areas. Thus the people who lived in hilly, pastoral, agricultural, coastal and desert areas were hunters, cowherds, farmers, fishermen and robbers respectively. The caste system in Tamilaham was quite different from the Aryan caste system.

Had it been the same then there would not have been any difference between the Aryan culture and the Dravidian. Andanar, Arasar, Vanigar, and Velalar were the four castes listed by Tolkappiar. But this classification does not at all correspond to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras of the Aryan four-fold division. It was not so because the Sangam social polity was not priest-dominated as it was in the Aryan. The Arasar group did not belong to the Kshatriyas because monarchy was known to Tamilaham even before the beginning of Aryanisation. As the merchant classes existed everywhere in the world, the Vanigas of Tamilaham need not correspond to their counterparts in the north. The Velalar did not correspond to the Sudra caste because the Velalar socially and politically occupied a higher place in society because the kings intermarried Velalas. So the Aryan division of the caste system with the Brahmin atop and the Sudra at the lower rung did not exist in Tamilaham. It is pointed out in the *Purananuru* that superiority of a caste depends upon learning and not caste based on the accident of birth. *Tirukkural* also endorses the same view. In it, it is pointed out that by birth all are equal, and only by occupational merit differentiation sets in. Though the Aryanisation did not totally affect the caste system of the south as such, the advantage of dividing society on a functional basis was accepted by the society at large. The fact that skill in arts can be easily and better cultivated and understood as though it is in the air by the members of a particular caste gave additional support to the caste system. The feeling of superior and inferior class came to stay from the days of *Silappadikaram*. The Goldsmith being a Kammala walked at a respectable distance from other higher castes treading along the same street among whom Kovalan was one. Untouchability also crept in. The Brahmins were held in high esteem because of their learning and pious ways. Apart from the Brahmins, there were other castes such as Vaniga, Velala, Minavar, Blacksmith, Goldsmith, Cobbler, Carpenter, Weaver, Ayar, Vedar, Panar, *etc.* The multiplication of castes was nothing but a natural corollary of the growth in the number of occupations.

**Slavery**

Slavery was known as is evident from the mention of slaves being employed in Pearl-fisheries in the Coromandel coast. Enslavement of people for non-payment of debts was a much-despised custom from the olden days.

**Position of Women**

It is not possible to paint a rosy picture about the position of women in the Sangam Age. She was in no way considered equal to man. Great importance was attached to the chastity of women. She had to consider her husband as very God itself and do everything according to his wishes. This clearly demonstrates her subordinate position and she had always to play second fiddle to man's life. Though her principal domain was home, she was no recluse. She was not confined to the kitchen alone and it was not a taboo to be well-read or educated or well-acquainted with the happenings in the world. We come across a number of poetesses in Sangam literature like Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, *etc.* Women had no right to property. The custom of *sati* was in vogue. The widow was expected to lead a simple life eschewing all comforts and conveniences. Tonsuring the head of a widow was an indigenous practice of the Tamils which had no sanction in the Sanskritic scriptures.

The courtesans occupied an honoured place in society. These *parattaiyar* or *kanigaiyar* were well-versed in the sixty-four arts of which the most important being the art of playing the *yal.* The state allowed unlicenced prostitution to them to lead a licentious life. The prostitutes were of two types. The professional prostitutes who took to it as a living and who spread their net wider to get all possible catches were known as *cheri parattaiyar* or *kamakkanigaiyar.* But there were other professional prostitutes who cast their eye on only one particular patron and lived a life of pleasure with him without entering into the wedlock. Such were called *kadar parattaiyar* or *kamakilattiyar.* A concrete example of this type is Madhavi and her amorous life with Kovalan.

**Marriage**

The earliest type of marriage known to the Tamils was *Kalavu* in which the *talaivan* and *talaivi* themselves consummate the marriage without the consent of parents and with no rituals. The eight types of marriage—Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Gandharva, Asura, Rakshasa and Paisacha—as mentioned in the Dharmasutras were unknown to the Tamils. The three types of love as mentioned in Tamil literature are *Aintinai, Kaikkilai* and *Peruntinai.* The first represents pure love, the second unrequited or one-sided love and the third unsuited love Love at the secret courtship level is known as *kalavu.* When this becomes public, it results in marriage after suitable ritualistic cere-

monies. Love after marriage is known as *karpu*. So *kalavu* and *karpu* blend together the non-ritualistic and the ritualistic type of marriages. So, in course of time, ritualistic marriages came to stay in actual practice in the Sangam Age. The tying of *Tali* or mangalasutra was not an Aryan custom but a Tamil practice. When ritualistic marriage became a *fait accompli*, negotiated marriage followed in its wake. As it was the practice in ancient days for the bridegroom's party to initiate the marriage negotiations, the question of dowry was out of question. On the contrary the bridegroom had to pay a price for the bride.

**Food Habits**

The food of the people consisted of rice and millets. The vegetarians attached much importance to milk and its products and a number of milk delicacies were common. Meat-eating was fairly extensive. The turtle, fish, venison and the flesh of hare were also used. Drinking was quite common. While the king and the rich people drank imported wine, the poor drank toddy. The use of betel was quite common with the people.

**Dress and ornaments**

The dress of the people varied from garments of green leaves around one's waist down to the rich muslin variety of exotic colours. While the women from the higher strata of society wore two garments, the one from the waist downwards to the ankles and the other an upper garment known as *oliyal*, the other women used only the lower garment. Women adorned themselves with ornaments such as *silambu* (anklet), sentiru or *deiva utti* (a flower-like ornament for the head), *todu* (earring), a chain of *kasus* for the neck, a ring or *modiram* for the fingers and toes, *valai* (bangles), *etc.* Women paid especial attention to cosmetics. They bedecked themselves with flowers.

**Amusements**

Music, dance and drama gave entertainment to people with high aesthetic tastes. Bull-fighting was a common pastime in pastoral areas. Cock-fighting, goat-fighting, *etc.*, were popular village pastimes. Wrestling was another pastime. Dicing was widely prevalent andit had quite often ruined many families. Womenfolk indulged in light games such as *ammanai* or playing with coloured balls, singing while swinging, rearing birds for hearing their articulation, *etc.*

**Literature**

The literary outbursts of the people are indicative of the excellent heights they had reached in the art of living. The external happenings

are categorised as *Puram* songs while the intimacy of domestic life and personal observations were treated as *Aham* songs. The eight anthologies (*Ettuttogai*) and the Ten Idylls (*Pattuppattu*) are the main Sangam works. While the outstanding grammar work *Tolkappiam* is considered a pre-Sangam work, the monumental *Tirukkural* is considered a Sangam classic. The eight anthologies are *Narrinai*, *Kuruntogai*, *Aingurunuru*, *Padirruppattu*, *Paripadal*, *Kalittogai*, *Ahananuru*, and *Purananuru*. The ten Idylls are *Tirumurugarruppadai*, *Porunarruppadai*, *Sirupanarruppadai*, *Perumbanarruppadai*, *Mullaippattu*, *Maduraikkanchi*, *Nedunalvadai*, *Kurinjippattu*, *Pattinappalai*, *Malaipadukadam*. *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* the two great epics, are considered as post-Sangam works. The various works referred to above describe in candid language the various facets of personal and social life. The devotion of a devotee, the love of a mother, the heroism of a warrior, the munificence of a patron, the deeds of the Kings, the love-pangs of a Queen, the characteristics of a city or a river or a natural scenery, *etc.*, are all portrayed in a remarkable manner. As K. A. N. Sastri says: "They have, to a great extent, made up for the absence of more tangible records of ancient life like epigraphy and archaeological antiquities and should be looked upon as highly veracious literary accounts regarding the subjects to which they address themselves. It is needless to say that as literary products, they evince a very high degree of excellence, pregnant with suggestive import, having a brevity of style and directness of expression, a variety of rhetorical forms and above all a close rapport with nature and man's innermost feelings and instincts. They form the most precious heritage of the early Tamils".

The Sangam literature is full of sentiments for ideal life. The various poems express a warm zest for the good things in life. The spirit of the age is reflected in extolling the virtues like heroism and altruistic love The duties of different sections of the people are also neatly laid out in the songs. Universal outlook predominates in some poems. The general impression one gathers from the perusal of these works is a sense of simple living and high thinking.

### Fine Arts

Painting or *oviakkalai* was highly developed. Sculpture of the ceramic type was developed. Dance, music and drama—the three *iyals*—were well-cultivated and greatly enriched.

### Religious Life

The religious beliefs of the people are in consonance with the

natural divisions of the soils by them. The *Mullai* tract had Tirumal (*Vishnu*) as the presiding deity of the land while the *Kurinji* had for its god Murugan. Indra was the God of *Marudam* while Varuna was supreme in *Neidal*. Korravai or Durga was worshipped in *Palai*. Legends were in vogue in praise of the chosen gods. While these gods were the particular gods of the area, worship of all these gods were quite common in all the places. So was the case with the worship of Siva People believed in spirits and their evil influences and offered sacrifices to propitiate them. Sacrifices were conducted to please Indra, Agni and Siva. Moreover, a host of minor gods were worshipped by the rural-folk seeking protection for their professional pursuits. Almost each professional caste had a particular deity to ward off evils. Image worship was known. Fruits, garments, flowers, sandal-paste, incense, *etc.*, were offered to Gods.

## 2. THE KALABHRAS

The Sangam Age might have come to an end by the middle of the 3rd century A. D. From the closing years of the 3rd century A. D. to the closing years of the 6th century A. D., Tamilaham was brought under the sway of the Kalabhras. The Cholas suffered political eclipse from the 4th to 9th century and the Pandyas from 4th to 6th. This was mainly due to the Kalabhra incursions. The political history of the Pallavas from the closing years of the 4th century A. D. till the accession of Simhavishnu in 575 A. D. is obscure. This was also due to the Kalabhra incursions The Pallavas and Pandyas recovered sooner from this rude shock towards the close of the sixth century. But the Cholas recovered only after a lapse of another three centuries. The origin of this race is shrouded in mystery. We are unable to say with any precision as to the reason for their spectacular rise to power and the decline of the traditional three kingdoms of the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandyas.

The insight into the incursions of the Kalabhras is gained through literary and epigraphic evidences. Of the literary evidences, special mention must be made of *Tamil Navalar Charitai*, *Yapparungalam* and *Peria Puranam* in sketching the nature of the Kalabhras. On the epigraphic side of the picture, the Kasakkudi plates of Simhavishnu, the Velvikkudi plates of Nedunjadayan, the Kuram plates of Narasimhavarman I and the Nerur plates of Chalukya Vikramaditya II indicate in a hazy manner the influence of the Kalabhras.

The learned authorities in the field differ in their views about the original home of the Kalabhras. One school of thought identifies these people with the Muttaraiyars. Another school of thought maintains that they were an indigenous caste. Yet another view is that they came from the Mysore region. The magic of their success would have been greater and sustained had they been an indigenous race. The extensive Buddhist and Jain revival during this period along with the repudiation of earlier land grants indicate the possibility of alien rule rather than the rule of local castes. It can safely be considered that they came from outside Tamilaham. Dr. S. K. Iyengar is of the opinion that these people belonged to Venkatam region and were known as Kalavars. They were a predatory tribe and their chief Pulli of Tirupathi is mentioned in Sangam works. This interpretation of the origin of the Kalabhras stands to reason also because the occupants of the *Palai* region taking to robbery as their chief profession is exactly in line with the mode of life led by the people in that geographical area during the Sangam Age. When the Pallavas occupied the Tondamandalam region, these sturdy people might have been disturbed from their original abode to the south. The Deccan expedition of Samudra-gupta and the subsequent defeat and humiliation of Vishnugopa of Kanchi, the Pallava ruler, must have spurred their valour and they should have come into headlong collision with the Pallavas. After defeating the Pallavas, the Kalabhras riding on their crest of victory should have swept over the whole of Tamilaham.

There is no doubt about the adverse effects of Kalabhra rule in Tamilaham. In the first place, the old political division among the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandyas disappeared on account of their defeat at the hands of the Kalabhras. There is no denying the fact that these kingdoms were re-established subsequently but the loss in continuity of the rule was responsible for the loss in the ideals of the society subsequently. The Jain and Buddhist religious beliefs swept over Tamilaham like torrential floods and the impact of these could have been due not a little to the patronage of the Kalabhras. The Kalabhras sometimes even abrogated earlier land grants made by the kings. They did not seem to have subscribed to the lofty catholic outlook of the early Tamils. When the religious revival took place in the 7th century A.D., there is a marked tendency to stress the Hindu path of devotion as opposed to the somewhat gay secular life of the early period. This is reflected in the literature, art and architecture of the subsequent

period. Religion attains greater primacy and literature is theological in tone. As the civilization of Tamilaham was woven on stronger fibre, it withstood the barbarous onslaught of the Kalabhras and with certain slight modifications retained the essential features.

## 3. THE PALLAVAS

### Origin

The origin of the Pallavas still remains a mystery. One theory connects the Pallavas with the Pahlavas or Parthians. The Pahlavas along with the Sakas occupied Tondamandalam on the eve of the decline of the Satavahanas. But this theory is solely based on the resemblance of the name 'Pallava' with 'Pahlava'. Dr. S. K. Iyengar gives a Tamil origin to the Pallavas. The Pallava Kings were also known by the name Tondaimans. The word '*Tondan*' in Tamil refers to a man who does service to others. The Pallavas before they assumed royal robes served under the Satavahanas as faithful servants in high capacities. After the decline of the Satavahana power, they annexed a large portion of the territory on the eastern coast and that came to be known as Tondamandalam. But as the early Pallava rulers used Prakrit in their official documents and as they patronised Sanskrit and Tamil, this theory can also be dismissed as untenable. Another theory says that the Pallavas were a branch of the Vakatakas. Yet another theory gives them a Chola-Sinhalese origin. The Telugu origin of the Pallavas is another theory. Prof. Sathianathier advances the theory of Tondamandalam origin to the Pallavas. According to him: "the Pallavas became feudatory to the Satavahanas and, after the collapse of the latter power about A. D. 225, converted their gubernatorial status into a royal one... The theory of the Tondamandalam origin of the Pallavas of Kanchi best explains the historical facts relating to the problem of their origin, *viz.*, that their earliest documents are in the Prakrit and Sanskrit, not in Tamil, and that their traditions and their administrative system are, at least in the early stages, not South Indian or Tamil in character".

The various theories mentioned above reflect conflicting views. It is true that the earliest Pallava documents were in Prakrit and Sanskrit and not in Tamil. The Satavahanas, to whom the Pallavas remained as feudatories, patronised Prakrit to the complete exclusion of Sanskrit. The long association of the Pallavas with the Satavahanas made them proficient in Prakrit. By the time the Pallava rule reached its zenith, Sanskrit became the dominant language as the revival in Sans-

krit literature had started during the Gupta period. As Kings they became proficient in Sanskrit and they issued their documents in Sanskrit also. By remaining in one region, it is not necessary that the rulers should use the local language. They could as well use any other language in which they are well-versed for official purposes. The common accepted factor in all theories is that the Pallavas were originally feudatories to the Satavahanas. It is with the origin of the Pallavas that complication arises. Taking into account the languages used, the horse-sacrifice performed and above all the Brahmanical descent, it is not improbable to assume that they came from the north and settled in Tondamandalam.

## POLITICAL HISTORY

The political history of the early Pallavas is very obscure. From information available from charters, Simhavarman (*c.* A. D. 300) may be considered as the first ruler. He was succeeded by Sivaskandavarman (*c.* 330) who may be considered as the first great ruler of the dynasty. He carved out a kingdom stretching from the Krishna to the South Pennar and including the Bellary district, and ruled over it with Kanchi as the capital. He performed a horse-sacrifice. Vishnugopa (350–375) was one of the rulers of the south defeated by Samudragupta. The political history of the Pallavas in the 5th and 6th centuries is very obscure. This was due to the incursion of the Kalabhras. With the accession of Simhavishnu in the 6th century, chronology and geneology become more clear.

### Simhavishnu (575-600)

With Simhavishnu dawned a new era of progress and glory to the Pallavas. He extirpated the Kalabhras. He extended his territories upto Cauvery. He is said to have defeated the Kings of Chola, Pandya and Ceylon. He worshipped Vishnu. Bharavi, the celebrated author of *Kiratarjuniya*, visited Kanchi during his reign. Bas-reliefs of Simhavishnu and his two queens can be seen at Mahabalipuram. He assumed the title of *Avanisimha* (Lion of the Earth).

### Mahendravarman I (600-630)

Mahendravarman was a King of varied talents. He was an administrator, poet, musician and builder. He was the celebrated author of *Mattavilasa-prahasana*, a Sanskrit drama. His rock-cut temples dedicated to Siva and Vishnu are very famous. As a Jain, he persecuted people professing other faiths. But he was converted to Saivism by Appar. For his varied talents, he earned the title *Vichitrachitta*. Pula-

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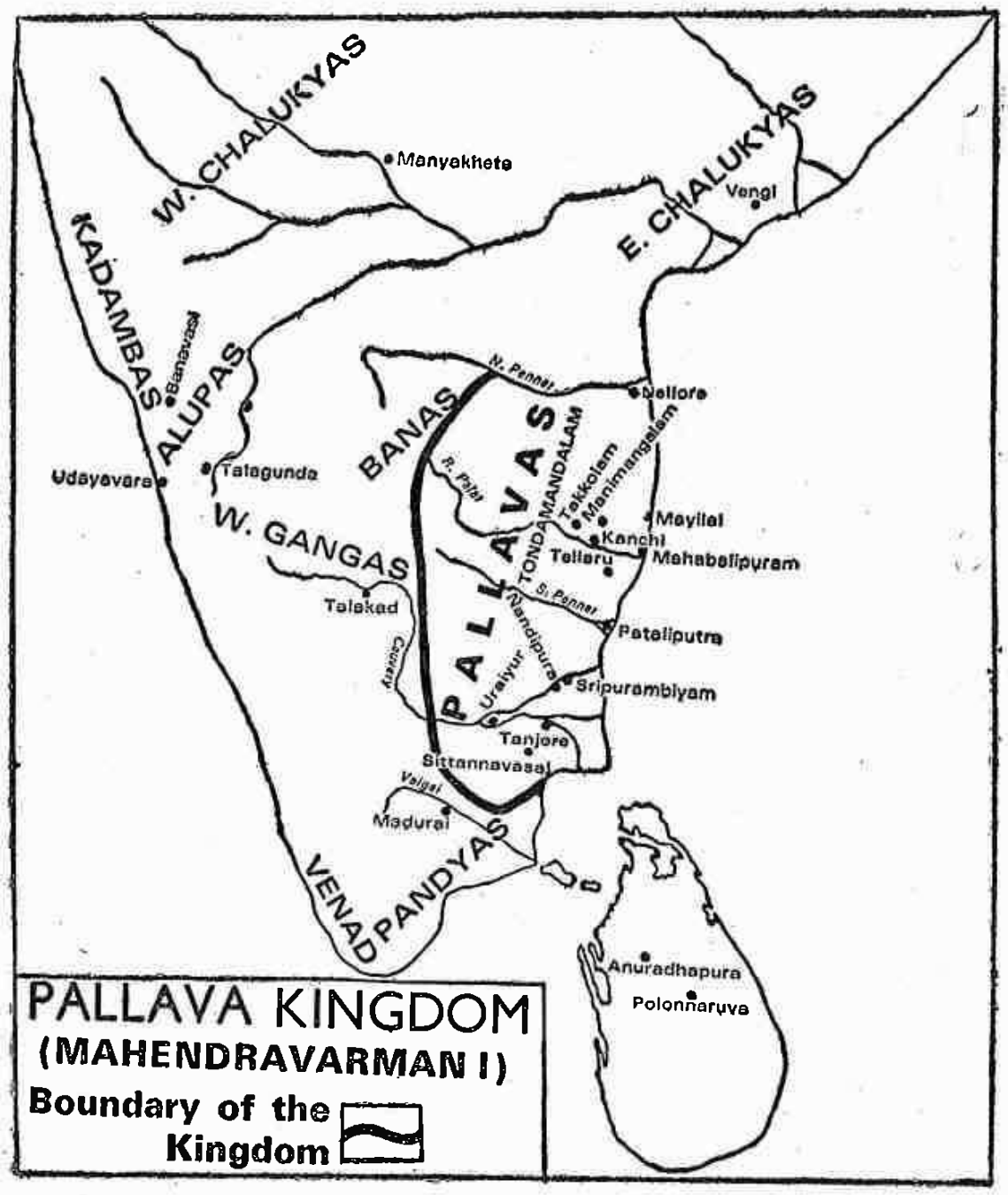
kesin II, the Chalukya King of Vatapi, defeated and wrested from him the province of Vengi.

### Narasimhavarman I (630-655)

Mahendravarman I was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman I. He defeated Pulakesin II at Manimangalam in Kanchi and other places.




He led an expedition to Vatapi, destroyed the city and killed Pulakesin II. After scoring this signal victory, he assumed the titles of '*Vatapi-konda*' and '*Mahamalla*'. In his expedition to Vatapi he was ably assisted by Manavarma, the exiled Ceylonese prince. In recognition

for his services, the Pallava King sent two expeditions to Ceylon to restore him to his ancestral throne. He achieved success only in the second attempt. Hiuen-Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim, visited Kanchi during his reign. Narasimhavarman improved a port-town near Kanchi and called it Mahamallapuram after his name which in course of time got corrupted into Mahabalipuram.

### The other rulers

Narasimhavarman I was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman II (655–660). He was succeeded by his son Paramesvaravarman I (660–680). He was defeated by Vikramaditya I, the Chalukya ruler. But Pallava inscriptions show that Paramesvaravarman won a signal victory over Vikramaditya at Peruvalanallur, near Lalgudi. Paramesvaravarman was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman II (680–700). He built the famous Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi. Narasimhavarman II was succeeded by his son Paramesvaravarman II (700–710).

During the reign of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (710-775), Vikramaditya II, the Chalukya ruler, captured Kanchi without destroying it. He defeated Nandivarman II in 740. Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta King, conquered Kanchi. But he concluded peace with Nandivarman II after marrying his daughter to him. Nandivarman II built the Muktesvara temple at Kanchi.

Nandivarman II was succeeded by his son Dantivarman (775–826). He was defeated by Dhruva and Govinda III, the Rashtrakuta Kings. The rise of the Rashtrakuta power in the Deccan and the penetration of the Pandyas from the south eclipsed the power of the Pallavas. The last ruler of the dynasty Aparajita (875 893) was defeated and killed by Aditya Chola and with that the dynasty came to an end. Petty Pallava chiefs, however, continued to rule over various parts of the country as feudatories to the Cholas down to the 13th century.

### Administration

The Pallava system of administration was modelled on that of the Maurya system in the beginning. With the lapse of time, the tone of the administration continued to remain Maurya but with an admixture to some extent of the Gupta system. The King was all-in-all in the administration of the country. The crown-prince occupied a great position. The King was assisted in the day-to-day administration by a Council of Ministers. The Purohita occupied a very important place in the cabinet. Very often the offices of the Purohita and the Chief Minister were combined in one person. The king was the fountain

of justice. For the sake of administrative convenience, the country was divided into a number of units. The village had its own assemblies and committees. The Pallavas kept the army on smooth and efficient lines Navy formed an organ of the defence forces. Unlike in other systems, additional information is available with regard to different taxes. The land-tax was the main source of revenue. There were other taxes such as professional taxes, sales-tax and excise duties. The Pallavas bestowed great attention on water supply and irrigation. The maintenance of tanks, canals, roads and temples was left to the villages.

## Religion and Literature

Saivism and Vaishnavism flourished in the country. Buddhism and Jainism were fast losing their ground. The Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars brought about a remarkable revival in the religious faith of the people. The Pallava rulers patronised men of letters. Kanchi served as a great centre of Sanskrit learning. The Pallava rulers promoted Vedic studies. They encouraged the development of Sanskrit literature. It was only at a later period that they encouraged Tamil literature. Dharmapala who presided over the Nalanda University hailed from Kanchi. Bharavi, the celebrated author of *Kiratarjuniya*, visited Kanchi during the reign of Simhavishnu. Mahendravarman I wrote a Sanskrit drama, *Mattavilasa-prahasana*. The soul-stirring *Tevaram* and the *Nalayira Prabandham* represent the religious literature of the period. The Saiva saints like Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar, and Vaishnava Alvars like Tirumangai Alvar and Tirumalisai Alvar flourished during this period. Every temple served as a centre of religious learning. The famous Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi was the meeting-place of great scholars.

## Art

It was in the field of art and architecture that the Pallavas excelled. Their style of architecture became the basis of the Dravidian style. They created a new epoch in the history of rock-cut and sculptured temples and relief sculptures. Narasimhavarman I improved a port-town near Kanchi called Mahamallapuram which in course of time became the birthplace of South Indian architecture and sculpture. There were four distinct stages in the development of Pallava art. The Mahendra style introduced the cave style in the construction of temples. The specimens of such temples can be seen in Trichinopoly, Mammandur and Pallavaram. The Mahamalla style introduced the rock-cut style. The "Seven Pagodas" or the *Rathas* of Mahabalipuram, each

one cut from a great boulder, belong to this style. The rock-cut temples are beautifully sculptured with figures of human beings, birds and animals. "The Arjuna penance" or "the Descent of the Ganges" is the best sculptural specimen. The Rajasimha style introduced the structural style. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi and the shore-temple at Mahabalipuram are the best specimens of this type. The Aparajita style is an improvement on the Rajasimha style. The Bahur temple is the best specimen of this style. The paintings of the Jain shrine at Sittannavasal and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi belong to this period. Had the Pallavas flourished for some more time, they would have made Mahabalipuram, a romance in stone. Percy Brown remarks: "Of all the great powers that together made the history of southern India none had more marked effect on the architecture of this region than the earliest of all, that of the Pallavas whose productions provided the foundations of the Dravidian style".

## 4. THE CHOLAS

### Early History

In the Sangam Age, the Cholas occupied a pre-eminent place in the political history of the South. Ilanjetcenni, Karikala, and Senganan were the most important rulers of the early Chola line. Of these Karikalan was undoubtedly the greatest of the Chola kings of the Sangam Age. Many legends have been woven around his fair rule. But there can be no doubt about his extraordinary ability in the art of warfare and administration. He won a decisive victory over the combined forces of the Cheras, Pandyas and some subordinate chiefs at Venni. Due to internal dissensions and Kalabhra invasions, their power began to decline towards the close of the 3rd century A. D. From the closing years of the 3rd century A. D. to the closing years of the 6th century A. D., Tamilaham was brought under the sway of the Kalabhras. The Cholas suffered political eclipse from 4th to 9th century and the Pandyas from 4th to 6th. However, the Pallavas and the Pandyas recovered sooner from this rude shock towards the close of the 6th century. The Pandyas asserted their power in the south and the Pallavas became very powerful in the north. The Cholas recovered only after a lapse of another three centuries. But the Chola Tiger retreated only to pounce with redoubled vigour subsequently. Towards the close of the 9th century, the power of the Pallavas dwindled and the Pandyas were also reduced to a very insignificant position. Once again, the Cholas came to the limelight towards the middle of the 9th century. It goes to

Vijayalaya (850-871) the credit of reviving the last glory and power of the Cholas. He captured Tanjore and started the later Chola Imperial line.

### Aditya I (871-907)

Vijayalaya was succeeded by his son Aditya I. He defeated and killed Aparajita, the last Pallava ruler, and put an end to the Pallava hegemony. By this victory, Aditya I became the undisputed master of Tondaimandalam and Cholamandalam. He married a Pallava princess. He wrested the Kanchi region from the Pallavas, and Coimbatore and Salem districts from the Pandyas. He worshipped Siva and built many temples dedicated to Him. His territories extended from Cauvery in the south to the boundary of the Rashtrakutas in the north.

### Parantaka I (907-955)

Aditya I was succeeded by his son Parantaka I. He made a successful raid on Madura and took the title of '*Maduraikonda*'. In 915, he defeated the combined forces of Rajasimha II, the Pandya King, and the ruler of Ceylon at Vellur. In the third encounter with the Pandya King, he expelled him to Ceylon. He obliterated out of existence the remnant of the Pallava power and extended his territories upto Nellore. Towards the close of his reign, he came into clash with the Rashtrakutas. The Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna III ably assisted by his brother-in-law Butuga II, the Western Ganga ruler, won a signal victory over the Chola ruler at Takkolam in 949. The crown-prince Rajaditya died in the battle-field. In spite of this defeat, the Chola glory remained unsullied. The period between the death of Parantaka in 955 and the accession of Rajaraja I in 985 is very obscure. It will suffice here to state that five Kings—Gandaraditya, Arinjaya, Parantaka II (Sundara Chola), Aditya II, and Uttama Chola—ruled during this interval.

### Rajaraja the Great (985-1014)

Rajaraja I was the son of Parantaka II through a Kerala princess Vanavanmadevi. He came to the throne in 985. He was considered as the greatest of the Imperial Cholas, the prototype of Karikala Chola of the Sangam Age. Immediately after he assumed the reins of government, he entered into a career of conquest. The imperial ambitions of Rajaraja attained fruition with the able assistance of his son Rajendra. He followed an aggressive policy towards the Later Western

Chalukyas of Kalyani and a friendly policy towards the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. He directed a three-phased attack against the Cheras, Pandyas and the Sinhalese. He worsted the Pandyas in two battles, destroyed a Chera fleet at Kandalur near Trivandrum and humbled the Sinhalese ruler. He annexed Northern Ceylon and created a Chola province in Ceylon with Polonnaruva as the capital. There he constructed a Siva temple. He wrested a large portion of Mysore from Taila II, the Western Chalukya ruler of Kalyani. Satyasraya, the successor of Taila II, invaded Vengi in 1006 and razed the forts to the ground. Rajaraja I sent his son Rajendra on an expedition to teach Satyasraya a lesson. He ravaged the Chalukya territories, mercilessly butchered many people and returned with an immense booty. Tungabhadra was fixed as the boundary between the Chola and Chalukya empires. Rajaraja I interfered in the politics of Vengi. He played the part of King-maker. He restored the elder branch represented by Saktivarman I. He gave his daughter Kundava in marriage to Vimaladitya, the younger brother of Saktivarman. This matrimonia alliance ultimately paved the way for the union of Chola and Chalukya crowns. Towards the close of the reign of Rajaraja, he captured Maldive Islands.

Rajaraja I was not only a great conqueror but also a great administrator. In the words of K A Nilakanta Sastri, "The accurate survey and assessment of the country for purposes of land revenue, the perfection of the administrative organisation of the country by the creation of a strong and centralised machinery corresponding to the staff of secretaries in a modern administration, and the posting of representative officers of the central government in suitable localities, the promotion of a system of audit and control by which village assemblies and other quasi-public corporations were held to account without their initiative or autonomy being curtailed, the creation of a powerful standing army and a considerable navy which achieved even greater success under Rajendra than under himself, mark out Rajaraja as the greatest among the empire-builders of Southern India". The Rajarajesvara (Brihadisvara) temple at Tanjore constructed by him is a fitting monument to his memory. He was a Saivite and patronised men of letters.

### Rajendra Chola (1012–44)

Rajaraja was succeeded by his son Rajendra in 1014. He was associated with his father in the government of the country from 1012. He was the worthy son of a worthy father. He increased the power

and glory of the Chola empire by his several conquests in the south and the north. In addition to that, he consolidated the conquests of his father. During the time of Rajaraja only northern Ceylon was captured. But during the time of Rajendra, he undertook an expedition to Ceylon in 1017 and completely conquered Ceylon. Mahinda V, the Sinhalese ruler, was taken captive along with other royal belongings. He constructed many Siva and Vishnu temples at Ceylon. The rule of the Cholas in Ceylon lasted for 12 years. He annexed the Pandya kingdom and appointed his son, Rajadhiraja, as its viceroy with the title of Chola-Pandya. He ruled over it with Madura as the capital and subsequently Kerala was also put under his charge. Next,Rajendra turned his attention to the Western Chalukya King, Jayasimha II, who made inroads into the Chola territory. Rajendra defeated Jayasimha II. He assumed the title *Jayamkonda Chola* to commemorate his victory over the Chalukyas. Kalinga invited the attention of Rajendra next. The cause for the war was that in the previous campaign Jayasimha was supported by the ruler of Kalinga. After defeating him the Chola army reached West Bengal and crossed the Ganges. Rajendra triumphed over many Kings in North India, the most important of them being Mahipala I, the Pala King of Bengal. In memory of his victory, Rajendra styled himself "*Gangaikondan*" and built a new capital known as Gangaikonda-cholapuram.

In 1025, Rajendra sent a naval expedition to Kadaram and Srivijaya. Srivijaya was a kingdom in Sumatra. The exact location of Kadaram is not known. The reasons for this naval expedition were that Srivijaya commanded all the trade routes between India and China and as the Cholas wanted to maintain constant contact with the Chinese Emperor, it had to depend on the sweet whims and fancies of the Srivijaya kingdom. Another cause was Rajendra's desire for a unique *digvijaya* across the seas. The friendly relations which so far existed between the two countries were broken. Rajendra organised a grand expedition which proved to be a complete success. The King of Srivijaya was taken captive and many places including his capital Srivijaya and Kadaram were taken Finally, the kingdom was restored to its ruler on his acknowledging Chola overlordship. To commemorate his victory, Rajendra assumed the title of "*Kadaramkonda Chola*".

After the Kadaram expedition, Ceylon raised the standard of rebellion about 1029. As a result of this, the sway of the Cholas in Ceylon gradually loosened and during the time of Kulottunga I the

island slipped out of the hands of the Cholas. Rebellions broke out in the Kerala and Pandya kingdoms which were put down by his son Rajadhiraja I. Rajendra assumed the title of '*Mudikonda*' because he captured the crowns of Ceylon, Kerala and Pandya kingdoms. Towards the close of Rajendra's reign a Chola invasion of the Western Chalukya empire was undertaken and Rajadhiraja is said to have sacked Kalyani and brought home the *dwarapalaka* (door-keeper) image. Minor campaigns were undertaken in some parts of Mysore.

**Rajadhiraja I (1044-1054)**

Rajendra I was succeeded by his son Rajadhiraja I. In spite of fresh troubles that arose in Ceylon, he kept his hold on Ceylon. He ravaged the Chalukya territories thrice. In his third expedition, he defeated Somesvara I of Kalyani at Koppam in 1052 or 1054. But he received a fatal wound and died.

**Rajendra II (1052-1064)**

After his brother's death in the battle-field, Rajendra II immediately inhaled the insignia of royalty. He continued his hostilities with the Chalukyas. He defeated Somesvara I at Kudal-Sangamam in 1062.

**Virarajendra I (1062/63-1069)**

Virarajendra I who succeeded his brother Rajendra II continued the traditional rivalry with the Chalukyas. Somesvara I challenged the Chola ruler to fight a pitched battle at Kudal-Sangamam. Virarajendra accepted the challenge. But to his surprise, Somesvara I did not turn up. So he ravaged the Chalukya territories and erected a pillar of victory on the banks of the river Tungabhadra. During the reign of Somesvara II, Virarajendra burnt the Chalukya city of Kampili. But Somesvara II is said to have succeeded in driving out the Chola King from his kingdom. Somesvara II quarrelled with his brother Vikramaditya VI and the latter sought the help of Virarajendra. He got him some territories from Somesvara II and gave his daughter in marriage to Vikramaditya VI.

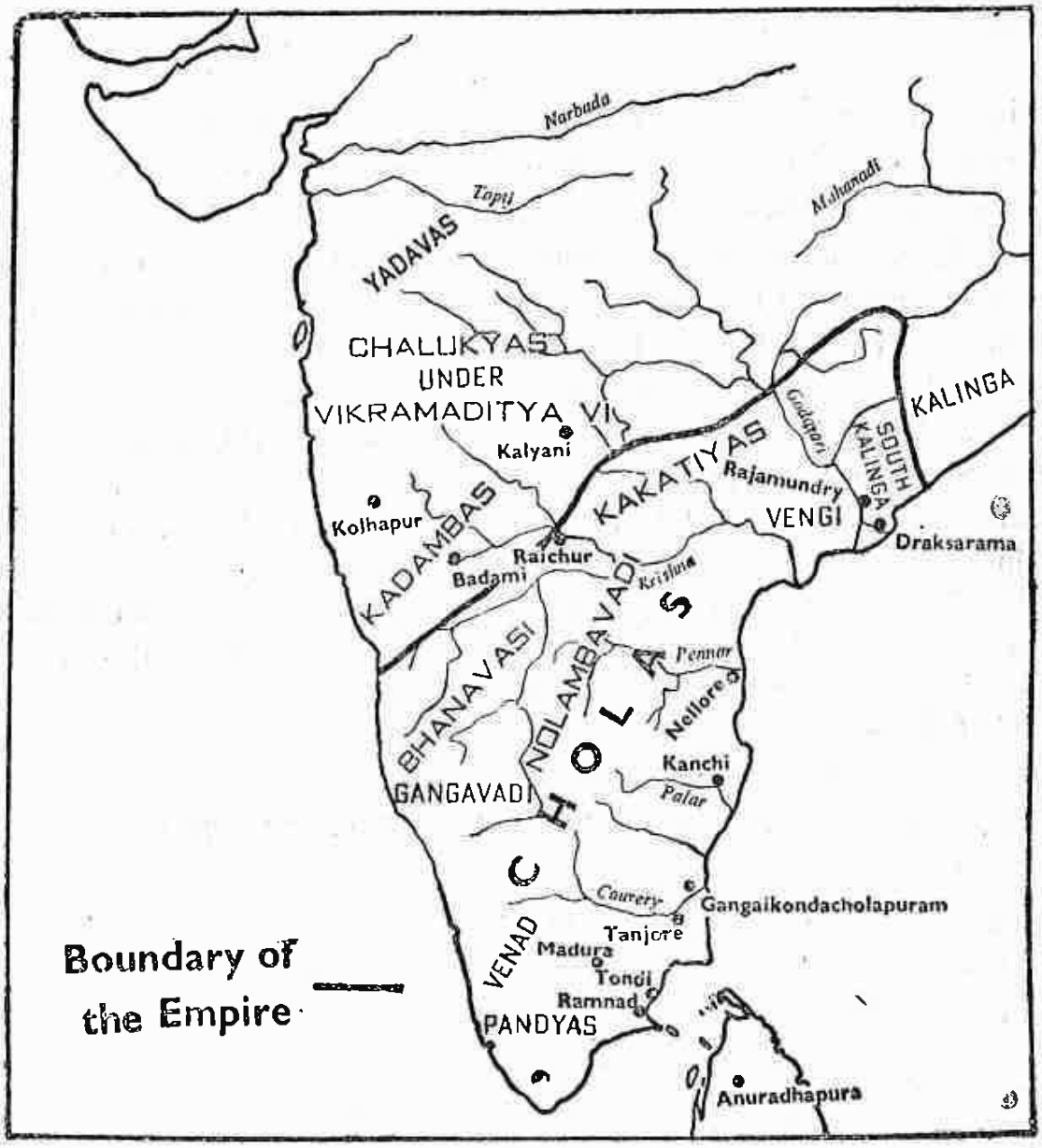
**Adhirajendra (1067/68-1070)**

Virarajendra was succeeded by his son Adhirajendra. He reigned for a few weeks and met with an unnatural death.

**Kulottunga I (1071-1122)**

Adhirajendra was succeeded by Kulottunga I, the great-grandson of Rajaraja I. His father Rajaraja I Eastern Chalukya, was the son of Kundava, the daughter of Rajaraja I Chola and his mother was Ammangadevi the daughter of Rajendra I Chola. Thus he had a great

admixture of Chola blood rather than the Chalukya blood in his veins. Yasah-Karna, the Kalachuri King of Chedi, invaded Vengi. But he did not achieve anything. In 1075 Ceylon proclaimed its independence. After the death of Vijayaditya VII, the Chalukya ruler of Vengi, Kulottunga I Chola united the Chalukya and Chola crowns. He




THE CHOLA EMPIRE UNDER KULOTTUNGA I

deputed his son as Viceroy to Vengi. He made peace with the ruler of Ceylon in 1088 and gave his daughter in marriage to the Sinhalese King. He brought the Pandyas and Cheras under his control. He led a successful expedition against Kalinga. In 1117 Vishnu Vardhana Hoysala, wrested Gangavadi (a major part of Mysore) from Kulottunga I. Vikramaditya VI, the Chalukya ruler of Kalyani, wrested Vengi

from Kulottunga I.

### Vikrama Chola (1118-1135)

Kulottunga I was succeeded by his son Vikrama Chola. He recovered a part of Gangavadi and Vengi. He richly endowed the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram.

### Kulottunga II (1133-50)

Vikrama Chola was succeeded by his son Kulottunga II. He patronised men of letters. He encouraged the development of Tamil literature. He patronised Ottakkuthan, Sekkilar and Kamban.

### Rajaraja II (1146-73) and Rajadhiraja II (1163/66-1179/82)

Kulottunga II was succeeded by his son Rajaraja II. He intervened in a civil war that was going on in the Pandya kingdom and burnt his fingers. Rajadhiraja II put an end to the civil war.

### Kulottunga III (1178-1217/18) and his successors

Rajadhiraja II was succeeded by Kulottunga III. The civil war again broke out in the Pandya kingdom. Towards the close of his reign, he was defeated by Maravarman Sundara Pandya I. In spite of this reverse, he held the kingdom intact He was the last great ruler of the Chola dynasty. Rajaraja III (1216–1250) was defeated by the Pandyas. He was taken captive by a Chola-chieftain, Kopperunjinga. He was later on released due to the intervention of the Hoysalas. Rajendra III (1246–1279), was defeated by Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I and became a feudatory to the Pandyas from 1258.

## ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL LIFE UNDER THE CHOLAS

Inscriptions and literary evidences are the main sources of information for the study of the Chola system of administration. The Chola polity was an elaborate and complicated one.

### The King

The King occupied the foremost place in the administrative set-up. Kingship was hereditary. But in some cases the younger sons were nominated to the exalted office. The princes so nominated were called *yuvarajas*. They were associated with the ruling Kings and took an active part in war and peace. The Chola Kings ruled over an extensive empire which added to their dignity and power. The capital was Tanjore. After the capture of the Pallava territories, Kanchi served as a second capital. Rajendra I founded a new capital city, Gangaikondacholapuram. The King maintained great pomp and show in the court. Though the King wielded great powers, he never behaved like a despot

because his autocratic tendency was tempered and controlled by the Council of Ministers and the Administrative Staff Though he was not bound by their advice, he never turned a deaf ear to it because he was conscious of the collective wisdom of their counsel. The King was a law-abiding monarch. The law was above the King and not the King above the law. The frequent royal tours increased the efficiency of the administration. The images of the Kings and Queens were installed in temples obviously indicating the fact that they believed in the Divine Right theory of Kingship. Further, the worship of the images of Kings and Queens greatly enhanced the power and prestige of the Kings

## Central Government

Inscriptions and literary sources do not indicate the existence of a Council of Ministers. But the heads of departments might have served as ministers. In the day-to-day administration of the country, the King was assisted by his immediate attendants (*Udankuttam*), the heads of departments (ministers) and a chancery (*Olai*). The officers were divided into two ranks, the upper *Perundaram* and the lower *Sirutaram*. The offices became hereditary. The officers were paid by assigning lands to them. They were also entitled to a share in the spoils of war. Decentralisation as opposed to overcentralisation was the most characteristic feature of the Chola system of administration.

## Revenue Administration

The main source of income came from the tax on land. The share of the state was fixed at one-third of the gross produce which was payable in cash or kind. The lands were periodically surveyed, classified and the taxes assessed. As land-tax constituted the bulk of the revenue, the state took utmost care to ensure agricultural prosperity. The maintenance of tanks and the reclamation of forests and waste lands were left under the care of the Village Assemblies During times of crop failures and famine, taxes were remitted. Public revenue which flowed from other sources came from customs and tolls, professional taxes, salt-pans, mines, forests, *etc.* A major portion of the revenue was spent on defence and the upkeep of the showy court. A substantial portion of the revenue was spent on social services. Liberal grants were made to educational institutions. Liberal endowments were made to temples and for other religious purposes. Money was spent on public utility schemes like the construction of roads, tanks and irrigational canals. The maintenance of roads, tanks and canals was left to local

assemblies.

### Justice

The administration of justice was not very severe. It was purely a local affair. The village assemblies were given large judicial powers. Fines and imprisonments were the usual punishments meted out to minor offences. For heinous crimes like murder, the intensity of the punishment varied according to the nature of the murder. If the murder committed was not deliberate, the murderer was fined sixteen cows and he was expected to burn a perpetual lamp in the nearest tempel to honour the dead. In case of cold-blooded murder, the culprit was given capital punishment. Cases of treason were tried in the royal courts by the King himself.

### Army

The Cholas maintained a standing army. The army consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and navy. The army was divided into regiments and stationed in cantonments spread throughout the country. Each regiment had a corporate life of its own. They took an active part in the civic life. It is on record that they had given liberal grants to temples and created charitable endowments. The Chola army was well-drilled and disciplined. During the marches and operations, they wrought untold misery to the civil population. With a fine navy, the Cholas converted the Bay of Bengal into a Chola lake.

### Provincial Administration

For the sake of administrative convenience, the empire was divided into eight *mandalams* or provinces during the time of Rajaraja I. The *mandalams* were divided into *valanadus* and *nadus*. The next administrative unit was *kurram* or *kottam*. Each *kurram* consisted of a number of villages. The provinces were usually put under the charge of the members of the royal family.

### Local Administration

The two Uttaramerur Pillar Inscriptions of Parantaka I give an account of the local administration. The keynote of the Chola administration was the autonomy given to the local units. The village assemblies enjoyed great powers. Two types of Assemblies—*Ur* and *Sabha* or the *Mahasabha*—figure in inscriptions. The *Ur* was probably a general assembly of all the adult people. But it was the *Sabha* or *Mahasabha* that looms large in the Chola inscriptions. With regard to the constitution of the committees of the *Sabha*, the Uttaramerur records say that each of the 30 wards in the village should nominate for

selection suitable persons with the following qualifications regarding age (between 35 and 70), property (should own a house and an acre and a half land), learning (knowledge of the Vedas), moral purity of a high order not only of the member concerned but also his specified relations, and disqualification for those members who had already served in any one of the committees for three consecutive years. Out of the persons duly nominated, each of the 30 wards chose one member each by the *kudavolai* system (lot system). Among the 30 members so chosen, the 12 members senior in age and learning and who had already served in the garden and tank committees were selected to *Samvatsara-variyam* (annual committee); 12 to the *Totta-variyam* (garden committee); and 6 to the *Eri-variyam* (tank committee). Two other committees *Panchavara-variyam* (standing committee) and *Pon-variyam* (gold committee) were similarly constituted. Apart from these, committees such as *Nyaya-variyam* (justice committee), *Koyil-variyam* (temple committee), *etc.*, are also mentioned in other records. It is needless to say that the committees were known as *variyams* and their members *variyapperumakkal.* The *Sabha* or *Mahasabha* was known as *Perunguri* and its members *Perumakkal.* Usually the assembly met in the village temple and occasionally under the foot of a tree or on the bank of a tank.

The functions of the *Sabha* were many and varied. Besides managing the common lands, it controlled the private lands. It recorded the transfer of property. It was entrusted with the reclamation of forests and wastelands. It assisted the royal officers in surveying the land and assessing the tax. It collected the land revenue. It settled land disputes. It was entrusted with powers to impose taxes on the villages and remit such taxes if the situation warranted. It also looked after the administration of justice. It looked after the maintenance of roads, irrigation works, tanks, *etc.* It supervised the endowments such as religious, medical, *etc* , through its *dharma-variyam,* and made provision for the promotion of learning. The assemblies in the Chola period may be considered as the democracies of the open-air type.

## Religion

Saivism and Vaishnavism made rapid strides during the Chola period. The Chola rulers in general patronised Saivism. Buddhism and Jainism were on the decline. From the existence of the images of Buddha in Hindu temples, it could be inferred that Buddhism did not

become totally extinct. Jainism had its stronghold at Kanchi. The Chola Kings in general followed a policy of religious toleration. But there were stray instances of persecution. The period abounded in Saiva Nayanmars and Vaishnava Alvars.

### Literature

In the field of literature, "the age of the Imperial Cholas constitutes the most creative epoch of South Indian History". The Chola period witnessed literary outbursts in Tamil literature to a remarkable extent. The Kings encouraged the promotion of Tamil literature. The Bhakti movement revived by the Saiva and Vaishnava saints provided an additional impetus to productions in Tamil literature. The *Thirumurai* of Nambi Andar Nambi and Ramanuja, the *Nurrandadi* of Amudanar, the *Ramayana* of Kamba and the *Periapuranam* of Sekkilar were some of the religious productions of the period. The other works in Tamil of a literary value are the *Jivakachintamani* of Tiruthakkathevar, the *Virasoliyam* of Buddhamitra, the *Kalingattupparani* of Jayangondan, the *Yapparungalam* of Amitasagara, the *Nannul* of Pavanandi, *etc.*

### Education

Public education, a neglected chapter during a later period (Mughals), received the attention of the state. Each village had its own school conducted under the shade of a tree. The teachers were remunerated from the income which accrued from the common land in the village. Provision was made for higher education in schools and colleges attached to Mattas, Pallies or Viharas. The educational institutions were liberally endowed by the state. Higher education was free and the teachers were remunerated both in cash and kind (paddy). Vedas, Grammar, Mimamsa and Vedanta were the subjects taught.

### Art

The Chola Kings were great patrons of art. They constructed a number of temples in the typical Dravidian style. The two best specimens of the architecture of the period are the Brihadisvara (Rajarajeswara) temple built by Rajaraja the Great and the temple at Gangaikonda-cholapuram built by Rajendra I. Speaking about the excellence of the Chola art, Fergusson points out that "the Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewellers". Some of the best specimens in sculpture can be seen in the temples.

# 5. THE PANDYAS

## PANDYAS OF THE SANGAM AGE

The Pandyas had a hoary past. Mention about the Pandyas is made even in the works of Megasthenes and Kautilya. As patrons of Tamil learning and culture, their position was even more prestigious than the other two crowned heads. Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludi, Kadalul mainta Ilamperum Valudi, Ariyappadai kadanda Nedunjeliyan and Talaiyalankanattu Nedunjeliyan were some of the important kings of the period. It was Ariyappadai kadanda Nedunjeliyan who died of agony and shock when he learnt that his hasty judgment caused the execution of Kovalan. Talaiyalankanattu Nedunjeliyan was the most distinguished member of the Pandyas of the Sangam Age. He defeated the combined forces of Irumporai (Chera King), a Chola king and five subordinate chiefs at Talaiyalankanam near Tiruvarur. He ruled over a vast kingdom comprising the modern districts of Madura, Ramnad and Tirunelveli with Madura as the capital. The early Pandya power began to decline due to the rise of the Pallavas in the 4th century A. D. and due to the invasion of the Kalabhras.

## THE EARLY PANDYAS

From the closing years of the 3rd century A. D. to the closing years of the 6th century A. D., Tamilaham was brought under the sway of the Kalabhras. The Pandyas suffered political eclipse from the 4th to the 6th century A. D. and the Cholas from the 4th to the 9th century. The Pandyas and Pallavas, however, recovered sooner from this rude shock towards the close of the 6th century. But the Cholas recovered only after a lapse of another three centuries.

The first great ruler of the Early Pandyas was Kadungon (590–620 A. D.). He freed the country from the clutches of the Kalabhras. Maravarman Avanisulamani (620–645) completely freed the country from the control of the Kalabhras. Sendan (645–670) is said to have defeated the Cheras. Arikesari Maravarman (670–710) is said to hav-defeated the Cheras and the Pallavas. He defeated the Pallavas at Nelveli identified with Tirunelveli. Kochchadayan Ranadhira (710–730) defeated a chieftain at Marudur near Ambasamudram. Maravarman Rajasimha I (730–765) occupied the Cauvery region and besieged Nandivarman Pallavamalla at Nandipura. Udayachandra, the Pallava general, came to the latter's rescue and saved his King from the awkward position in which he was placed. He is said to have defeated Kirtivarman II, the

Chalukya ruler of Vatapi. Varaguna I (765–815) was an imperialist by instinct. He came into clash with the Pallavas and Cheras and extended his territories at the expense of his adversaries. Srimara Srivallabha (815–862) invaded Ceylon. He defeated the confederate forces of the Pallavas, Gangas, Cholas, Kalingas, *etc*, at Kudamukku (Kumbhakonam). But he sustained defeats at the hands of Nandivarman III Pallava at Tellaru and Nripatungavarman Pallava at Arichit. Varaguna II (862-880) tasted a defeat at the hands of Aparajita Pallava at Sripurambiyam. Parantaka Viranarayana (880-900) was succeeded by Rajasimha II (900–920). He was defeated by Parantaka Chola at Vellur (identity not known) in 915. In another encounter, the Pandya ruler was expelled to Ceylon and with his flight the Pandya empire temporarily came to an end in 920.

## THE LATER PANDYAS

The Pandya power was revived during the beginning of the 13th century. The Pandyas occupied a subordinate position and paid tribute to the Cholas till the end of the rule of Kulottunga III in 1218. But later on they threw off the Chola yoke and proclaimed their independence. The Pandya power reached its zenith during the second half of the 13th century. Inscriptions are the main source of information for the study of the Pandyas during this period. Literary evidences and foreign notes supply information to a lesser degree.

### Jatavarman Kulasekhara I (1190–1215/16)

Jatavarman Kulasekhara I remained a feudatory to Kulottunga III Chola. He might have held sway over Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari areas. Just before his death, he nominated Maravarman Sundara Pandya as the crown-prince.

### Maravarman Sundara Pandya I (1216-1238)

The exact relationship of Maravarman Sundara Pandya I with his predecessor is not definitely known. The Pandya power was revived by him in the beginning of the 13th century. His predecessors paid tribute to the Imperial Cholas. The abject humiliation to which his ancestors were put to wounded his feelings. He wanted to wipe out this disgrace. It was with this end in view that he undertook an expedition to the Chola territories in 1219. He defeated Rajaraja III Chola and burnt the capital cities of Uraiyur and Tanjore. He might have annexed a part of the Chola kingdom. Rajaraja III was forced to pay tribute.

The Pandyas, Cholas and Hoysalas were related by matrimonial alliances. But this was no bar to their mutual rivalries. In order to get the upperhand in Tamil politics, Ballala II Hoysala and his son Narasimha II were too willing to help the Cholas against the Pandyas. Any growth in the influence of the Hoysalas in the Chola court would undermine the prestige of the Pandyas. This was the reason why Maravarman Sundara Pandya I reinstated Rajaraja III. As the promised amount of tribute was not paid by Rajaraja III, Maravarman Sundara Pandya I invaded the Chola kingdom for the second time in 1231 and brought his feudatory to senses.

### Jatavarman Kulasekhara II (1236)

If ephigraphic evidence is to be believed, then Maravarman Sundara Pandya I was succeeded by Jatavarman Kulasekhara II. In the opinion of Nilakanta Sastri, he might have been the crown prince towards the closing years of Maravarman Sundara Pandya I and he might have predeceased him.

### Maravarman Sundara Pandya II (1238-1253)

Maravarman Sundara Pandya II endowed many temples. During his time the Hoysala influence in the Pandya country increased. Rajendra III Chola invaded the Pandyan territories and forced Maravarman Sundara Pandya II to pay tribute. Thanks to the intervention of the Hoysalas, the Pandya king was restored to power.

### Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I (1251-1268)

Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I was the most distinguished member of the later Pandyas. The Pandya kingdom reached its zenith during his rule. He defeated the Cheras and drove out the Hoysalas. He defeated Rajendra III Chola and reduced him to vassalage in 1258. He conquered the Kongu country, and captured Kanchi and Nellore. Kopperunjinga, the Chola chief, submitted to him. He forced the ruler of Ceylon to pay tribute. He munificently donated to the temples of Srirangam and Chidambaram. His kingdom which then virtually became an empire extended from Nellore and Cuddappah districts in the north to Cape Camorin in the south.

### Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya (1268-1308)

Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya was the last great Pandya ruler. He conquered Quilon from the Cheras and assumed the title "Kollam Konda". He invaded Ceylon. The invasion was of a destructive nature.

## Conclusion

The power of the Pandyas steadily began to decline after the death of Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya. A war of succession ensued between his two sons—Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya. Taking advantage of the rift in the royal family, Malik Kafur, the general of Ala-ud-din Khilji, invaded Madura in 1311. The fratricidal feud and the Muslim invasion greatly undermined the Pandya prestige and power. Ulugh Khan (who later became Muhammad-bin-Tughluq), the son of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, invaded Madura in 1323 and made it a Muslim province. The Pandya rulers, however, continued their precarious existence until it was finally incorporated with the Vijaya-nagara Empire in the third quarter of the 14th century.

CHAPTER XII

# SPREAD OF INDIAN CULTURE ABROAD

The Indian culture like that of the Hellas did not confine itself to India alone. It spread to distant countries. Into the old bottle of social and national life of the people of other countries was poured the new wine of Indian culture. The phrase "Greater India" or "the Cultural Empire of India" refers to the countries which came under the influence of Indian culture. The Persian and Macedonian invasions in India opened new vistas for the dissemination of Indian culture abroad. The Greek incursions into India in a subsequent period provided greater opportunities for spreading Indian culture. In the field of mathematics, the numerals, the decimal system and the zero are the unique contributions made by India not only to Greece but to the whole world. In the field of philosophy, the Greeks were struck dumb-found by the celestial heights reached by India. Neo-Platonism expounded by Plotinus, Porphyrius and Iamblichus was influenced by the Indian philosophy. The Sufist philosophy in Persia with its liberal views on religion was influenced by the Indian philosophy. A monastic order for his religion was established by the Buddha. The Christian monasteries which sprang up in Europe after the death of Jesus Christ was copied from India. The Arab conquest of Sind was "an episode in the history of India and of Islam, a triumph without results". But it was not without its cultural effects. The Indian religion, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, music, painting, *etc.*, gave valuable lessons to Islam in its formative period. The Arabs carried the rich cultural heritage of India not only to their country but to Europe as well.

## Central Asia

Though Buddhism failed in the land of its own birth, the religion with its spirit of toleration and forbearance spread to other countries. The chief centres of culture in Central Asia were Kashgar, Kucha, Turfan, Khotan and Miran. Both Hinayana and Mahayana form of Buddhism flourished in these regions. The Indian art and languages influenced the art and literature of these regions.

## China

Buddhism went to China from India in the first century A. D. The Pro-Buddhist activities of Wu-Ti (502–549) won for him the title

"The Asoka of China". The famous Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien came to India during the rule of Chandra-gupta II Vikramaditya. The main pursuit of his life was to study Buddhist stories, legends and miracles connected with the life of the Buddha. The same was the case with other Chinese pilgrims like Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing. These Chinese pilgrims were the chief agents through whom the Indian culture spread to China. Buddhism influenced the art, literature and philosophy of China under Tang (618–906) and the Sung (960–1279) dynasties. Chu-Hsi (1130–1200), the exponent of neo-Confucianism, was influenced to some extent by the Indian philosophy.

### Tibet

Buddhism spread to Tibet from India in the 7th century A. D. The Indian scholars helped in establishing Lamaism in Tibet. Lamaism was "a priestly mixture of Saivite mysticism, magic and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry overlaid by a thin varnish of Mahayana Buddhism". King Ralpachan "the Augustus of Tibet" got the Buddhist literature translated into Tibetan.

### Burma, Korea and Japan

Saivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism spread to Burma from India. The Burmese art was influenced by Indian art. In course of time, Buddhism gained the upper ground and now it is the State religion of Burma. It spread to Korea in the last quarter of the 4th century A. D. Buddhism spread to Japan in the 6th century A. D. and it was made the State religion in 604.

### Ceylon

Ceylon, too got Buddhism from India. During the reign of Asoka, he sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sangamitra on a mission to Ceylon. The mission was a great success. The King of Ceylon, Devanampiya-Tissa, was converted to the Buddhist faith. Sangamitra brought with her a branch of the Bo-tree under which the Buddha got enlightenment. It was transplanted at Anuradhapura and it still remanis as the oldest historical tree in Ceylon. It is a standing monument to the cultural union between India and Ceylon. The Indian art exercised a profound influence on Sinhalese art. The Tamil language is widely spoken in Ceylon.

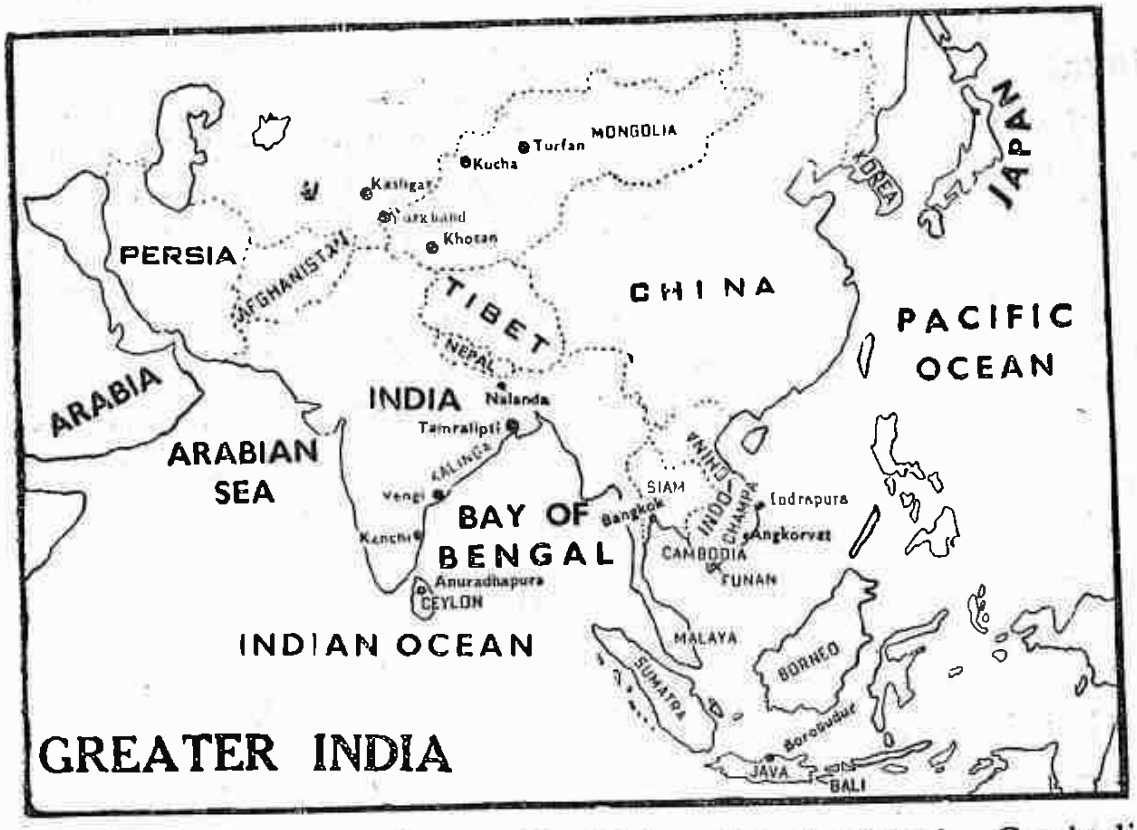
### Siam

The Indian culture exercised a profound influence on the countries of the Far East. Siam was colonised by the Hindus in the 3rd century A. D. The Thai language contains many Pali and Sanskrit words.

The Siamese laws were largely based on Hindu Dharmasastras. The temples at Bangkok reveal typical Indian style with the anecdotes of Ramayana sculptured in them. Buddhism also entered Siam. The Indian culture is still prevalent to a remarkable degree in Siam.

## Indo-China

Indo-China which then consisted of Champa (South Annam), Cambodia and Funan, was colonised by the Hindus. Champa was occupied by the Hindus before the 2nd century A. D. A Hindu kingdom was established in Champa with headquarters at Indrapura. Twelve Indian dynasties ruled over Champa. Saivism was the domi-




nant religion. Vaishnavism and Buddhism also flourished. Cambodia was colonised by the Hindus in the lst century A. D. Saivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism flourished in the country. The Vishnu temple at Angkor Vat is in the typical Dravidian style. The sculptural works in the temple depict anecdotes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Funan was also colonised by the Hindus in the first century A. D. Brahminism and Buddhism flourished in the country.

## Malaya

In the early centuries of the Christian era, Malaya was colonised by the Hindus. It formed a part of the Sailendra Empire of Sumatra

in the 8th century A. D. Saivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism flourished in the country.

## Sumatra

Sumatra was colonised by the Hindus in the 3rd or 2nd century B. C. The Srivijaya kingdom in which Sumatra was a part was founded in the 4th century A. D. and it came to the limelight only in the 7th century A. D. The Sailendra dynasty in Srivijaya was established in the 8th century A. D. The rulers patronised the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The commercial contact between India and Sumatra led to the spread of Islam in Sumatra. Islam was making rapid strides in Sumatra in the middle of the 14th century.

## Java

Java was colonised by the Hindus in the 2nd century A D. When Fa-hien visited Java in the 5th century A. D., Brahmanism was the dominant religion. But after his departure, the King of Java was converted to the Buddhist faith by Gunavarman. Java became a part of the Sailendra empire from A. D. 778 to 879. The Buddhist stupa in Borobudur is "a hill in nine stages; an epic in stone, the most wonderful Buddhist stupa in the world". With the departure of the Sailendra glory, Saivism once again got revived in Java. Many Hindu temples were constructed.

## Bali and Borneo

Bali was also colonised by the Hindus. Buddhism flourished in the country. The Indian culture is still prevalent to a remarkable degree in Bali. Borneo was colonised by the Hindus in the early centuries of the Christian era.

## Conclusion

From the early centuries of the Christian era, the Hindu culture began to radiate to distant parts in the East. The Hindu religion with its spirit of toleration, forbearance and its deep spirituality, Buddhism with its love and compassion of the Buddha, and the creative talents of the people manifested in art, architecture and literature exercised a profound influence on the people of the East. In the words of Prof. Sylvain Levi: "India has left indelible imprints on a quarter of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has a right to reclaim in Universal history, the rank that ignorance has refused her for a long time".

CHAPTER XIII

# THE RAJPUTS AND THE ARABS

## 1. ORIGIN OF THE RAJPUTS

The Rajputs as a class came to the limelight after the death of Harsha. They played a predominant and prominent part in the history of Medieval India. In the words of Smith: "They became so prominent that the centuries from the death of Harsha to the Muhammedan conquest of Hindustan, extending in round numbers from the middle of the seventh to the close of the twelfth century, might be called with propriety the Rajput period. Nearly all the kingdoms were governed by families or clans which for ages past have been called collectively Rajputs".

Apart from the political domination of the country by the Rajputs, they rendered two invaluable services to the country. As defenders of the Hindu faith, they preserved the Hindu religion and all its manifestations in art, culture, traditions and customs. As noble and patriotic sons of India, the Rajputs contributed their mite to arrest the onward march of the Muslims and held their expansion in check for sometime. Tod has paid glowing tributes to the valour of the Rajputs in the following words: "What nation on earth would have maintained the semblance of civilisation, the spirit or the customs of their forefathers, during so many centuries of overwhelming depression, but one of such singular character as the Rajputs? Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind, of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict or human nature sustain, and bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from the pressure and making calamity a whetstone to courage".

The origin of the Rajputs still remains a matter of much learned discussion among scholars. Various theories have been put forward to explain the origin of the Rajputs. The traditional view, the theory of foreign origin, agnikula theory and the theory of mixed origin are some of them.

### The Traditional View

The traditional view points out that the Rajputs were the descendants of the Kshatriyas of the Vedic times. The Rajputs traced their pedigrees to the sun and the moon as "*Suryavamsi*" or "*Chandravamsi*".

The protagonists of the theory lay emphasis on the value of tradition. The Ranas of Mewar (Guhilots) claimed their descent from Rama, the hero of the Ramayana. But the early inscriptions of Mewar point out that the founder of the dynasty was a Brahmin. Though the Pratiharas claim their descent from Lakshmana, the epic hero of Ramayana, the founder of the dynasty was a Brahmin. When tradition breaks down, epigraphy supplies a reliable source of information to the historian. From the study of the physical features of the Rajputs, it was found that they closely resembled to those of the Aryans. But the conclusion reached by anthropometric measurements are not true to historical facts in a country which was subjected to a number of foreign invasions which in their wake paved their way for the intermingling of the conqueror and the conquered. Historians like Gauri Sankar Ojha and Vaidya are the chief exponents of the traditional theory.

## Theory of Foreign Origin

The chief exponent of the theory of foreign origin of the Rajputs is Tod, the celebrated author of the "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan". According to him and other writers, the Rajputs were the descendants of Scythians or Sakas. According to them, the Sakas, Kushans, the Hunas and Gurjars came and settled in India, married Indian women and gradually got indianised. In support of his theory, Tod points out certain similarities between the foreigners and the Rajputs. The resemblances are horse-worship, aswamedha-sacrifice, bards, war-chariots, position of women, omens and auguries, love of strong fermented liquor, worship of arms, *etc.* The theory of Tod has been accepted by European scholars. The foreign origin of the Rajputs has been corroborated by epigraphic evidence.

## Agnikula Theory

According to this theory, Parasurama, the incarnation of Vishnu, destroyed all the Kshatriyas. The Brahmins prayed to God from Mount Abu to bless them with a warlike class to protect them from the conquerors. After forty days' prayers, four heroes emerged from the sacrificial fire and each one set up an independent Rajput race. The classes which so arose were the Paramaras, Chauhans (Chahamanas), the Solankis (Chalukyas) and Pratiharas. The Agnikula theory can be easily brushed aside because it solely rests on fiction.

## The Theory of Mixed Origin

The most satisfactory proposition that stands to reason is the mix-

ed origin of the Rajputs. The chief exponent of the theory is Dr. Smith. According to him: "the Kshatriyas or Rajput group of castes is essentially an occupational group, composed of all clans following the Hindu ritual, who actually undertook the work of government, that consequently people of most diverse races were and are lumped together as Rajputs and that most of the great clans now in existence are descended either from foreign immigrants or from indigenous races such as the Gonds and Bhars". Some of the Rajput clans like the Chauhans have a foreign origin. Some have an indigenous origin like the Chandellas of Bundelkhand and the Bhars of Oudh. According to Smith, the Chandellas were Hinduised Gonds. Those who had foreign blood and got converted to Hinduism before the sacrificial fire might have come to take the name of Agnikula Kshatriyas or fire-born Kshatriyas. Some of the Rajput families in the Punjab were originally Brahmins and after they assumed power became Kshatriyas or Rajputs. By profession they belonged to a particular group but racially they were divided. The Chauhans, Pratiharas, Paramaras and Chalukyas were foreign Rajputs. The Chandellas, Gahadavalas, Rashtrakutas and Kalachuris belonged to the indigenous class. The chief Rajput classes are the Pratiharas of Bhinmal and Kanauj, the Chandellas of Bundelkhand, the Paramaras of Malwa, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Chauhans of Sambhar and Ajmer, the Solankis (Chalukyas) of Gujarat, the Gaharwars (Gahadavalas) of Kanauj and Benaras, the Palas of Bengal and Bihar and the Senas of Bengal.

## 2. POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE UNDER THE RAJPUTS

### Introduction

The idea of imperial unity became an unattainable reality in the northern part of the country after the end of Harsha's rule. The Rajputs carried on the burden of administration from the middle of the 7th century to the end of the 12th century A. D. Though politically they were a disunited people, certain characteristic cultural traits dominate the age which can safely be termed as Rajput culture. They stoodforth as the champions of Hinduism and ardent patrons of Hindu culture and traditions. The Rajput Culture had absorbed the best elements of the earlier period but unfortunately showed certain distressing trends as well The total absence of external menace till the advent of Mahmud of Ghazni bred lethargy and indolence in the country. It had its pernicious effect in each and every field. The dynamic society

abruptly became static, the caste system assumed more rigidity and literature lost all its beauty and charm. The high aesthetic ideals and tastes cherished in architecture and sculpture received a shocking set-back. The morale of the people deteriorated because of the demoralisation of society, unorthodox forms of worship, *etc.* The growth of temple prostitution debased public morals.

## Political Condition

The various states were invariably ruled by Rajput Kshatriyas. There was no radical departure from the ancient practice of Kingship. The Rajput polity was feudal in nature. The King was the owner of all lands. The country was split up into a number of divisions each under a jagirdar. The jagirdars had to supply men and materials to the King in times of danger. The strength of the King depended upon the support extended to him by the jagirdars. Everything went on well as long as a strong and capable ruler was at the helm of affairs. But as soon as the strong hand was removed, internal feuds and dissensions broke out among the chiefs threatening the very unity and solidarity of the country. As the society had become more rigid in casteism, the Brahmana class gained an upper hand by virtue of their learning. The kings wielded supreme authority in the kingdom and the Brahmana class extended its unstinted support to them.

The administrative head of the state was the King with the usual executive and judicial powers. The principal source of income was land revenue which constituted one-sixth of the produce. The land was protected in turn by the King. The King was not only responsible for maintaining law and order within the state but had to safeguard the interests of the state from external dangers. The King was assisted in this process by learned ministers renowned for their loyalty, integrity and wisdom. The King decentralised many of the administrative routine to the subordinate officers. The representatives of the Kings in the various divisions of the kingdom formed an effective link between the villages and the King.

From time immemorial the villages were left untouched in matters of local affairs. This age-old custom was honoured by the Rajputs also. Petty cases were disposed off by the village panchayats themselves. It was always, however, open for anyone to approach the king for redressing his grievances. The villages ably protected by the system of self-rule contributed to the economic stability of the kingdoms. The king took deep interest in the welfare of the villages by suitable

administrative measures. Apart from rendering irrigational facilities, due consideration was shown during times of crop failures or famines. This in turn made the people loyal subjects who extended their unstinted support to the king during times of storm and stress.

The king was also the patron of arts and letters. There was no dearth of literary activities or of fine specimens of temple architecture during this period. In spite of constant feuds among different kingdoms and clans higher values of life were not allowed to languish for want of support.

The Rajput king was a symbol of honour and chivalry. His code of conduct in war and peace was exemplary. His code of chivalry was unsurpassed. In this, the king's attitudes and actions have won laurels from all quarters. They were tough fighters who put in all their marshalled energy to win a war. But they always followed a humane path towards civilian population. The Rajput king never violated any canon of decency in his dealings with other princes. His plighted word was the most sacred thing for him and there is no record of his having violated it. He never took advantage of his enemy's inability to impose severe penalties. He was extremely considerate to a fallen foe. Moreover his courage and willingness to face any odds in the battle-field were unsurpassed. He was an excellent horseman who wielded the sword in a dexterous manner. He was kindled by a fervour to protect Hinduism. The Rajput heroism virtually saved the northern part of the country from brutal Muhammadan onslaught. His pride in Kshatriyahood was justified by his valour.

## Social Condition

The social life of the people under the Rajputs reflected certain changes from the Gupta period. A greater rigidity and narrowness pervaded casteism which was the social anchor The priestly class became more exclusive and insular devoting to the ritualistic aspects of Hindu religion. Their pre-eminent position in religious sphere was unassailable. The Buddhist and Jain religious sects also flourished and the Hindu priestly class had to preserve higher values in order to prevent people from flocking to the other sects. This acted as an impetus to exalt religious practices to a grim level of accuracy. The Buddhist and Jain practices also had to conform to the high ideals of their Masters. The Brahmins occupied such an exalted position that they were even exempt from capital punishment. The Kshatriya class provided the country with kings and sturdy warriors. The Vaisyas apart from

looking after the business became a money-lending class also. The Sudras took to agriculture and continued to do all odd jobs to the three higher classes.

Society, in spite of Buddhist and Jain influences, was rigidly divided by Hindu casteism. Various sub-sects among each and every caste created a plethora of castes each exclusive and shunning the others. To quote an example, the Brahmins got divided into many sub-sects on the basis of territorial division and came to be known as Kanauji, Gaur, Konkini, Andhra, *etc.* Professional divisions nourished casteistic codes. The attitude of superiority was more than ever consciously exhibited by the upper strata of the society. Education was virtually the monopoly of the higher castes.

The rigours of the caste system did not decrease during this period. The lot of the low castes was miserable. The Outcastes lived in a miserable way. There was no social contact between these people and the rest of the society. They lived outside the limits of the cities and villages and were denied elementary human rights and consideration. They were treated as savages unworthy of human contact.

The marriage relations continued to be solemnised within the same castes and even within the sub-castes. However, one does come across occasional lapses from the rigidity imposed by the society.

The position of women during this period declined further. While we cannot doubt that as a rule she was highly respected, there was no denial that socially her position was an unenviable one. She did not have the normal access to education. She did not inherit or maintain property on her own right. She did not mingle freely in the society. In spite of the fact that the *Swayamvara* type of marriage was in vogue giving greater freedom to women to select their own spouses, it was offset by the practice of child marriage. There was no question of remarriage of a widow in the thick atmosphere of women's chastity. There is equally no denying the fact that by this time polygamy was a fairly widespread custom and an inevitable one for the Kshatriya class. All these led to a further deterioration in her status and position.

However, to compensate her social loss, she was installed as a paragon of virtues. She remained committed to the high ideals of fidelity and chastity. Women chose to commit suicide rather than lose their honour. A Rajput hero would do everything to protect the

honour of a woman. His code of chivalry was commendable. If the enemy forces defeated the local army, womenfolk would perform the traditional *jauhar*, *i e.*, immolate themselves in the fire. *Sati* was also widespread. Women willingly committed *sati* in the case of the Kshatriya class. It was instilled in them that such a course would lead to blessed reunion in heaven. In some cases, rather than facing an empty life of social ostracism, women committed *sati* The Rajput woman's code of honour has been immortalised in the annals of Indian history.

It is also interesting to observe that despite several social restrictions some women distinguished themselves in the field of literature. The names of Awanti Sundari, Indulekha, Marula, Morika, Vijjika, Shila, Subhadra, Padmashri, Madalsa, Laxmi, *etc.*, are well known in Sanskrit literature. They were no mean poetesses. There is also the evidence of an able woman administrator during this period. Akkadevi, a sister of Solanki Vikramaditya, was well-versed in warfare besides conducting herself ably in the field of administration and was the governor of four provinces. The women of some mixed castes cultivated fine arts like dancing. As the institution of temple prostitution had become confirmed, women of this class distinguished themselves in singing and dancing. Women of higher castes also cultivated music.

The exalted position of the Kshatriya woman did not alter the miserable lot of the average woman who was condemned to a very inferior position. Even Brahmana womenfolk did not receive education. But examples of distinguished women scholars were exceptions rather than the general rule. The disabilities imposed on widows were cruel and inhuman, to say the least. Others were none-too-happy. Having no general or technical education, being given away in marriage at a very early age, having to eke out an existence under a joint-family system and put up with the miseries in a mute manner, were the commonest living conditions in the middle and lower classes. The affluent and wealthy, however, had amusements enough to take care of their time.

The social conditions of the age present a mixed picture. There was no strong imperial government to protect the over-all interest of the people. This naturally led to divisions and constant feuds. In this process while the upper strata was not much affected by the shift

in the fortunes of the rulers, economic conditions for the lower classes fluctuated between decent livelihood and war-time restrictions. As a result of this we find only broken and discontinuous growth in art and architecture. Business transactions were often disturbed by the outbursts of war. Normally agricultural operations were not disturbed even during times of conflicts but one can easily imagine the anxious moments of the farmers during troubled war-times.

On the amusement side, people whiled away their time in a number of ways. Many of the early sports like hunting and chariot-racing were avidly followed by the ruling class. Music, drama, *etc.*, continued to entertain the populace during religious festivals and on important occasions like the birthday of a king or when according receptions to the victorious kings. The practice of indoor games like chess and dicing were popular. The use of betel was common. The use of wine and opium were quite common among the Rajputs. Meat-eating was looked down with disfavour.

The upper class people lived in palatial mansions and enjoyed all material comforts. The people of the lower economic strata lived under less fortunate circumstances but were cheerful enough to put up with the privations of life. If nothing else, religious practices had disciplined people to reconcile to their lot and we do not have any record of people rebelling against authority for improving their material welfare.

The aristocrats consumed sumptuous dishes and even the poor did not lag behind in consuming good dishes during innumerable religious festivities. Ornaments of gold, silver, ivory, *etc.*, were worn by the rich in fantastic numbers while even the very poor had limited gold or silver ornaments. The nobility dressed itself up in gorgeous fashion. Silk, linen, cotton and woollen clothes were used. Silk and linen embroidered with gold linings were profusely used. The silver or golden-laced garments were also used. The reference in the foreign accounts about the richness of the Indian land was no vain account though one doubts whether all the castes participated in the rich and colourful fabric of social life.

## Economic Condition

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. The tax was paid at one-sixth of the gross produce. Though Indian agricultural operations have been a gamble on the monsoon from time immemorial, the Rajput Kings did not neglect the construction of lakes or digging

canals for increasing agricultural production through irrigational facilities. During times of crop failures and famine, ameliorative measures were undertaken by the state. Though the main occupation of the people was agriculture, they were not indifferent to trade and industry. Trade and industry grew under the fostering care of the Kings. Cotton, steel and iron, metal and other industries flourished in the country. On the whole, the economic condition of the people was quite sound.

## Art

The Rajput period witnessed the production of some good specimens of architecture and sculpture. The Rajput period may be divided into two periods—650 to 900 A. D. and 900 to 1200 A. D.—from the point of view of the evolution of temple architecture. The first period witnessed a normal and natural growth. But during the later period, the artisan lost his originality and too much ornamentation was given to temple architecture. Further, the taste also got degenerated. Moral perversion ran riot to the extent of depicting obscene figures on stones. So architecture lost all the pristine beauty of the original art. Some of the temples constructed by them were the Somnath temple in Saurashtra, the Jagannath temple at Puri, the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvanesvara, the Sun temple at Konarak, the Khujaraho group of temples 30 in number, the 16 Brahmanical and Jain temples at Osia 32 miles from Jodhpur, Jain temples at Mount Abu, *etc.*

## Literature

The Rajput rulers themselves were great patrons of letters. Vakpatiraja II or Munja Paramara (974–995) was himself an accomplished scholar and patronised men of letters such as Padmagupta, Dhananjaya, Dhanika and Halayudha. Bhoja I (1010-1055 A. D.) was also an accomplished scholar and patronised men of letters such as Dhanapala, Uvata, *etc.* The important poets of the period were Bhatti, the author of *Ravana-vadha*; Magha, the author of *Sisupala-vadha*; Sri Harsha, the author of *Naishadha-charita*; Padmagupta, the author of *Navasahasanka-charita*; Damodaragupta, the author of *Kuttanimata*; Jayadeva, the author of *Gitagovinda, etc.* Dandin, the author of *Dasakumara-charita*; Dhanapala, the writer of *Tilakamanjari*; Subandhu, the author of *Vasavadatta*; and Bana, the author of *Harsha-charita* and *Kadambari* were the important prose writers of the period. Bhavabhuti, the author of *Malati-madhava, Mahavira-charita* and *Uttararama-charita*, was the most important playwright of the period. The historians of the period were Kalhana who wrote *Rajatarangini* and Bilhana who

wrote the *Vikramankadeva-charita*. Jayaditya's *Kasikavritti*, Bhartrihari's commentary on the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali and Sarvavarman's *Kantra* were important works on grammar. Books were also written on a variety of subjects like Law, Medicine, Astronomy, Philosophy, *etc.* Vernacular literature made great progress durirg this period. *Prithviraj Raso*, an epic poem describing the exploits of Prithviraj Chauhan, is a concrete example.

## 3. THE ARAB CONQUEST OF SIND

Arabia, a country of deserts, was the birth-place of a new religion called Islam. Muhammad, the Prophet, the founder of the religion, was accepted by the people of Arabia both as their political and religious leader. After the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D., his work was carried on by his successors called Caliphs. The might of Islam soon spread to Syria and Egypt within 8 years after the death of the Prophet. Persia came under its control in 641. The Sassanian dynasty which held sway over Persia came to an end in the same year. By 650, the northern boundary of Islam was pushed to the Hindukush mountains. Northern Africa between 640 and 709 and Spain by about 713 came under the sway of Islam.

### Causes of the Arab Conquest

The Arab Conquest of Sind was heralded by three naval expeditions to places south of it. The first expedition was conducted in 637 against Thana (near Bombay), the second against Broach and the third against Debal. These plundering raids ended in failure. The advance of the Arabs to Kabul and Afghanistan also failed. As the attack of Sind through Kabul and Afghanistan became impossible, the Arabs riveted their attention to Makran. They conquered Makran in 685. The immediate provocation for the Arab Conquest of Sind was that the pirates at Debal plundered eight ships carrying presents including women from the King of Ceylon to the Caliph of Baghdad and to Hajaj, the Governor of Iraq. So Hajaj wrote to Dahar, the King of Sind, to restore the plundered goods to him. The King expressed his inability to comply with the request on the ground that he had no control over the pirates. So Hajaj sent two expeditions to Sind. But the two expeditions failed resulting in the murder of the leaders of the expeditions. In the light of such disastrous failures, an elaborate and well-planned expedition was organised under the command of Muhammad-bin-Kasim, the nephew and son-in-law of Hajaj.

## Conquest of Sind

Muhammad-bin-Kasim was selected for the grand expedition. Though a lad of 17 years, he possessed to a remarkable degree dash and daring. "The story of Muhammad-bin-Kasim's adventure is one of the romances of history". With a well-drilled and disciplined army consisting of 6,000 picked horsemen and an equal number of camel riders, he started his Indian expedition. He stormed the city of Debal in 712. The Hindus after putting up a gallant resistance submitted to the Muslims. Many Hindus were mercilessly butchered. The conqueror bled the city white. He, then, proceeded to Nirun in the north (a little below Jarak in Haiderabad) and reduced the people to submission. Dahar, the Hindu King of Sind, waited with a large army at Rawar ready to give battle to him. But the Raja was defeated and killed. The widowed Rani and her son with 15,000 men put up a heroic resistance against the Arabs. But when the Rani lost hope, she and other women threw themselves into the fire. Muhammad captured the fort, murdered 6,000 men and seized the treasure of Dahar. He then captured Brahmanabad, the fort of Aror and Multan. He sent ten thousand picked horsemen under Abu Hakim towards the direction of Kanauj. But before he could start the campaign, the brilliant career of this excellent adventurer was cut short by the decree of the Caliph.

The stroy is told that the two daughters of Dahar, Parimal Devi and Suraj Devi, who entered the harem of the Caliph told him that their modesty was outraged by Muhammad-bin-Kasim. The fury of the Caliph knew no bounds and in a fit of frenzy he issued orders for the execution of Muhammad. Muhammad-bin Kasim submitted to the will of the Caliph without raising any protest. The dead body of Muhammad enclosed in a box was sent to the Caliph. When the box was opened in the presence of the two princesses, they told the Caliph that Muhammad was innocent and the story was fabricated by them to avenge the death of their father. But the story finds no historical support. The circumstances that led to the death of Muhammad still remains unknown. It seems quite probable that he became a victim to party-politics and was tortured to death at the orders of the Caliph.

## Administration of Sind under the Arabs

Governors were deputed by the Caliphs to carry on the administration of Sind. The administration was militiary in character. Sind

was divided into a number of districts (*iqtas*) each under an Arab military officer. He held the territory assigned to him on condition of military service. The soldiers lived in cantonments and soon such military centres developed into flourishing cities serving as great centres of culture and trade. While some soldiers received fixed salaries, others received lands.

The main source of revenue came from the land. It was assessed at two-fifth of the produce for irrigated lands and one-fourth for non-irrigated lands. The non-Muslims had to pay the *jizya* or poll tax. The administration of justice was not even-handed and it led to gross injustice to Hindus. Following the Koranic principles, the Qazi administered justice to both Hindus and Muslims. The civil cases of the Hindus were decided in their own Panchayats. In the beginning, the Arabs followed a policy of religious intolerance. However, in course of time, they eschewed violence and granted toleration to other faiths.

## Effects of the Arab Conquest of Sind

In the words of Lane-Poole, the Arab Conquest of Sind was only "an episode in the history of India and of Islam, a triumph without results". The Arabs entered the wrong quarter for the further expansion of their rule. Sind was not a fertile region. It was surrounded by powerful kingdoms. The onward march of the Muslims was arrested by the Chalukyas in the South, the Gurjara-Pratiharas in the east and the Karkotas of Kashmir in the north. Surrounded by such hostile neighbours, the failure of the conquest was only a foregone conclusion. With the decline in the power of the Caliphs of Baghdad, the Governor of Sind asserted his independence. In 871, the province of Sind was virtually handed over to the Governor, Yaqub-bin-Lais. After his death, Sind got divided into two divisions—Multan or Upper Sind and Mansurah or Lower Sind. The two kingdoms in course of time got engulfed under Turkish imperialism. Mahmud of Ghazni captured Multan in 1005 and Mansurah in 1025. Lower Sind shook off the Turkish yoke after the death of Mahmud of Ghazni and practically became independent in 1030.

The Arab occupation of Sind was not without its cultural effects. The Indian culture exercised a profound influence on Muslim culture. Though the Arabs conquered the Indian people physically, they in their turn were conquered by the Indians intellectually. The Arabs when they came to India were struck dumb-found at the high degree of civilisation which flourished in the country. They learnt many

things from India. The Indian religion, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, music, painting, *etc.*, gave valuable lessons to Islam in its formative period. The Arabs carried the rich cultural heritage of India not only to their country but to Europe as well. The Saracens or the Arabs in their turn brought with them a new culture and religion to India. They brought India into intimate contact with the Islamic world. It opened up new vistas for greater cultural and commercial progress.

CHAPTER XIV

# DYNASTIES OF NORTH INDIA

## 1. GURJARA-PRATIHARAS OF BHINMAL AND KANAUJ

The Gurjara-Pratiharas were Rajputs who were descended from the Gurjaras of Central Asia, who along with the Huns invaded India in the 5th and 6th centuries A. D. They gradually got mixed up with the Indian population. Nagabhata I was the founder of the Pratihara dynasty. His regnal period is usually assigned to the second quarter of the 8th century A. D. As he is said to have defeated the Arabs of Sind, he should have come to power a few years after 730 and should have ruled till 756. Nagabhata I is said to have tasted defeat at the hands of Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta King and the latter made the former to serve as door-keeper (*Pratihara*). Though the authenticity of the story cannot be accepted, yet it cannot be summarily dismissed that Dantidurga did not defeat a Pratihara King. The next two successors of Nagabhata I were mediocres. The fourth King in the line was Vatsaraja. He came to the throne in or before 778 and he held sway over both Malwa and Eastern Rajputana. His rule witnessed the triangular contest for supremacy in northern India among the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. The city of Kanauj was coveted as the central prize by these rulers. Vatsaraja succeeded in defeating Dharmapala of Bengal. Both Vatsaraja and Dharmapala tasted defeat at the hands of Dhruva, the Rashtrakuta King.

Vatsaraja was succeeded by his son Nagabhata II (A. D. 805–834). Indrayudha, one of the successors of Yasovarman of Kanauj, was defeated by Dharmapala of Bengal in 810. Dharmapala placed his protege Chakrayudha on the throne. Chakrayudha was dethroned by Nagabhata II in 816 and thenceforward Kanauj became the capital of the Gurjara-Pratiharas. The Rashtrakuta King Govinda III inflicted a defeat on Nagabhata II. Ramabhadra (834–836), son of Nagabhata II, was the next ruler. Ramabhadra was succeeded by his illustrious son Mihira Bhoja (836-885). With him a bright chapter opened in the history of the Pratiharas. In the triangular contest for supremacy over the north among the Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas, the Pratihara King Bhoja suffered major reverses at the hands of his adversaries during the first part of his rule. During the latter part of his reign, he

defeated his adversaries and revived the status and prestige of the Pratiharas. He set up a vast empire. In the north-west, his territories extended upto the Punjab. The Kalachuris of Gorakhpur and the Chandellas of Bundelkhand acknowledged his suzerainty. Malwa, Kathiawar, Gujarat and Oudh formed part of his empire.

Bhoja was succeeded by Mahendrapala I (885–910). He held the empire intact with the exception of some territory in the Punjab which he lost to Sankaravarman, the King of Kashmir. He added new territories to the empire by conquering Magadha and a part of Northern Bengal. Mahendrapala I was succeeded by Bhoja II (910–912). He was dethroned by his brother Mahipala I (912-944) during whose reign the empire began to decline. The Rashtrakuta King Indra III completely destroyed the city of Kanauj. The feudatory chiefs like Paramaras, Chandellas and Kalachuris gradually asserted their independence. Mahipala, however, succeeded in recovering a large part of his empire.

The successors of Mahipala I were Mahendrapala II, Devapala, Vinayakapala, Mahipala II, Vatsaraja II and Vijayapala. During the rule of the successors of Mahipala I, the empire dwindled in size. Rajyapala who succeeded Vijayapala towards the end of the 10th century A. D. ruled over only a small territory around Kanauj. When Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Kanauj in 1018–1019, Rajyapala ran away from the country. The city was sacked by Mahmud. He invaded Kanauj and the chicken-hearted Rajyapala met with his inglorious end at the hands of Vidyadhara, the Chandella King. Trilochanapala who succeeded Rajyapala was defeated by Mahmud in 1019. The last known ruler of the dynasty was Yasahpala. After the fall of the Pratiharas, confusion prevailed in the country. Ultimately, the Gahadavalas of Kanauj came to power by about 1090.

## 2. THE CHANDELLAS OF BUNDELKHAND OR JEJAKABHUKTI

One of the Rajput dynasties which rose to power at the expense of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire was the Chandellas of Bundelkhand or Jejakabhukti. The Chandellas were Hinduised Gonds. Nanuka laid the foundation of the dynasty in the first quarter of the ninth century A. D. Khajuraho was the capital of the Chandellas. The early rulers of the dynasty were feudatories of the Gurjara-Pratiharas.

The next ruler Vakpati ruled in the second quarter of the ninth century A. D. The two sons of Vakpati—Jayasakti and Vijayasakti—ruled in the third quarter of the ninth century A. D. Bundelkhand, which was ruled by Jayasakti or Jejjaka, came to be known as Jejakabhukti after his name. He gave his daughter Natta in marriage to Kokkalla I, the Kalachuri King. Jeyasakti was succeeded by his brother Vijayasakti. Vijayasakti was succeeded by his son Rahila and the latter was succeeded by his son Harsha. Harsha flourished in the first quarter of the 10th century A. D. He helped Mahipala I, his Pratihara overlord, to recover the dominions which he had lost to Indra III, the Rashtrakuta King.

Harsha was succeeded by his son Yasovarman I. It was during his reign that the Pratihara empire began to decline and he missed no opportunity in defying the central authority. He led a warlike career. He captured Kalinjar from the Pratiharas. He defeated the Kalachuris of Chedi and Paramaras of Malwa and pushed his southern boundary upto the limits of Chedi and Malwa. He also defeated the Palas and Kambojas and captured Gauda and Mithila. He built a temple dedicated to Siva at Khajuraho.

Yasovarman I was succeeded by his son Dhanga (954–1002 A D.) the first independent King of the Chandella dynasty. He shook off the Pratihara yoke and asserted his independence. Kalinjar, Gwalior and Allahabad formed part of his empire. He assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja*. He constructed a number of temples at Khajuraho. Dhanga was succeeded by his son Ganda (1002–1019). Ganda was succeeded by his son Vidyadhara. When Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Kanauj in 1018–1019, Rajyapala, the Pratihara King, ran away from the country. The abject humiliation stung the Chandella prince Vidyadhara to the quick. He invaded Kanauj and the chicken-hearted Rajyapala met with an inglorious end at his hands Mahmud of Ghazni who invaded India in 1021 and 1022 had a tough time with Vidyadhara. The next two rulers of the dynasty were Vijayapala and Devavarman. The next ruler Kirtivarman was defeated by Lakshmi-karna, the Kalachuri King. But Gopala, one of the vassals of Kirtivarman, defeated Karna and recovered the lost kingdom to his suzerain. The other rulers of the dynasty were Sallakshanavarman, Jayavarman, Prithvivarman, Madanavarman and Paramardi. The inscriptions of Madanavarman (1129–63) prove that he held sway over Khajuraho, Kalinjar, Mahoba and Ajaigarh. Paramardi (1167–1202) was defeated by Prithvi-

raja III, the Chahamana King. Qutb-ud-din Aibak captured Kalinjar in 1202 and Mahoba in 1203. Trailokyavarman (1202–41), the son and successor of Paramardi, recovered Kalinjar in 1205. The Chandellas continued to rule over a smaller territory in Bundelkhand until it was finally captured by Akbar in 1569.

## 3 THE PARAMARAS OF MALWA

One of the Rajput dynasties which rose to power at the expense of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire was the Paramaras of Malwa. Upendra laid the foundation of the dynasty in the first quarter of the ninth century A. D. The capital of the early Paramaras was Dhar. Subsequently, Ujjain became the chief city. The next two rulers of the main line were Vairisimha I and Siyaka I. Vakpatiraja I, the fourth ruler, raised the prestige of the dynasty. Vairisimha II, the son and successor of Vakpatiraja I, recovered Malwa from the Pratiharas. Siyaka II (Harsha) (A. D. 948–974), the son and successor of Vairisimha II, was the first independent ruler of the dynasty. The early Paramara rulers were feudatories to the Rashtrakutas. He threw off the Pratihara yoke during the early part of his reign and the Rashtrakuta yoke in the latter part of his reign. He attacked and plundered the Rashtrakuta capital Malkhed. Siyaka II was succeeded by Vakpatiraja II or Munja (974-995). He defeated Yuvaraja II, the Kalachuri King. He also defeated the Guhilas and the Chahamanas. Munja was trapped and killed by Taila II, the Chalukyan ruler of Kalyani. Munja patronised men of letters like Padmagupta, Dhananjaya, Dhanika and Halayudha. Munja was himself an accomplished scholar. He was succeeded by his younger brother Sindhuraja (995–1010).

Bhoja I (1010–1055), the son and successor of Sindhuraja, was the greatest ruler of the dynasty. He was a great conqueror. He defeated Jayasimha II, the Chalukyan King of Kalyani, Indraratha the ruler of Adinagara, and the ruler of Konkan. He was not able to establish his power in Bundelkhand. His attempt to capture Gwalior ended in failure. He won a signal victory over the Chahamanas of Sakambhari. But he miserably failed against another branch of the Chahamanas. Bhoja I was defeated by the confederate forces of the Solankis of Anhilvad, the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Kalachuris of Chedi. Bhoja I a was great patron of art and letters. He was himself an accomplished scholar. He patronised men of letters like Dhanapala, Uvata, *etc.* He was also a great builder. He built a new city called Bhojapura and constructed a number of temples dedicated to Siva.

Bhoja I was succeeded by his son Jayasimha I (1055–60). Udayaditya (1060–87) revived the fallen fortunes of the dynasty. The other rulers of the dynasty were Lakshmanadeva (1087–97), Naravarman (1097–1111) and Yasovarman (1111–1142). During this period, the dynasty fell into evil days. The Solankis of Anhilvad captured Malwa. Vindhyavarman and Subhatavarman revived the fallen fortunes of the dynasty. The last great ruler of the dynasty was Arjunavarman (1211–1215). His successors were very weak. The Paramara power gradually began to decline. Mahlak Deo, the last ruler of the dynasty, was overthrown by Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1302.

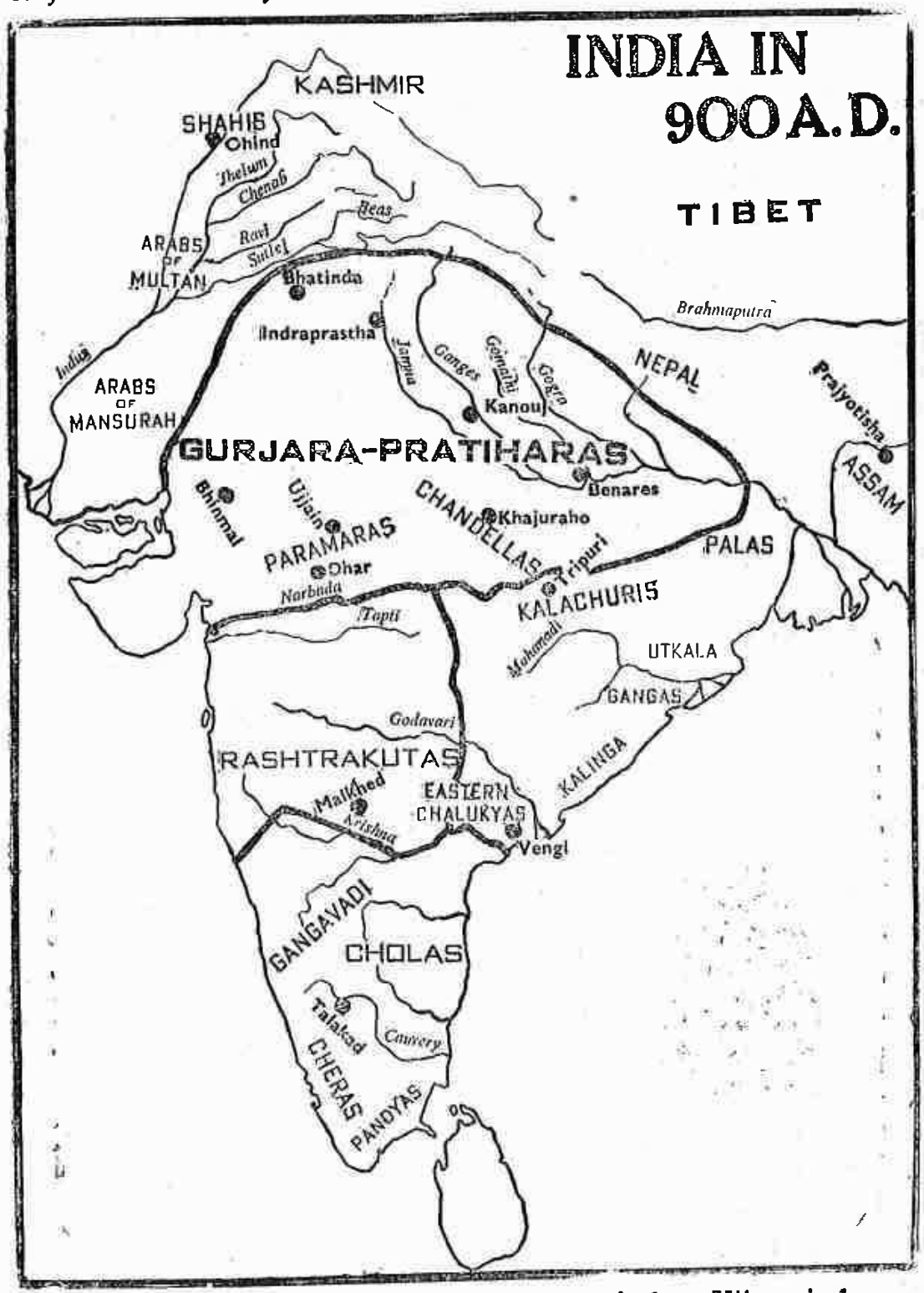
## 4. THE KALACHURIS OF CHEDI

One of the Rajput dynasties which rose to power at the expense of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire was the Kalachuris or the Haihayas of Chedi or Dahala or Tripuri. They rose to power by the end of the 9th century A. D. The founder of the dynasty was Kokkalla I (A. D. 875–925). His capital was Tripuri. He strengthened his position by effecting matrimonal alliances with the Chandellas and the Rashtrakutas and maintained cordial relations with the Pratiharas. Sankaragana I and Balaharsha were the next two rulers. The next ruler Yuvaraja I in the beginning of his reign tasted defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas. But after some years, Yuvaraja I succeeded in driving out the Rashtrakutas from his country. Lakshmanaraja, the next ruler, won victories over the Kings of East Bengal, Kosala and Gujarat. The next ruler Sankaragana II ruled for a short period. Yuvaraja II, the brother and successor of Sankaragana II, was defeated by Munja Paramara. The next ruler was Kokkalla II.

Gangeyadeva (1030–41), the son and successor of Kokkalla II, assumed the title of *Vikramaditya*. He entered into a career of conquest. He invaded Kosala, Utkala, and Kira in the Kangra valley. He captured Allahabad from the Pratiharas and Benaras from the Palas. But he suffered a defeat at the hands of Bhoja I Paramara. His son and successor Lakshmi-Karna (1041-73) was a great general. He defeated Bhoja I Paramara with the help of the Solankis and the Chalukyas. He invaded Vanga and defeated its ruler. He also defeated Kirtivarman, the Chandella King. He also defeated the Palas. But towards the close of his reign, he was defeated by the Palas, Chandellas, Paramaras, Solankis and Chalukyas.

Lakshmi-Karna was succeeded by his son Yasah-Karna (1073–1125). The Gahadavalas captured from him Allahabad and Benaras.

His position was further weakened by the defeats he sustained at the hands of the Paramaras and the Chandellas. Gaya-Karna, the next ruler, was defeated by Madanavarman, the Chandella King. The other




rulers of the dynasty were Narasimha, Jayasimha, Vijayasimha and Ajayasimha. A major portion of the Kalachuri kingdom was incorporated with the Delhi Sultanate between 1251 and 1309. Petty rulers

of the dynasty, however, continued to rule over a small territory near Tripuri. But they were overthrown by the Gonds in the beginning of the 15th century.

## 5. THE CHAUHANS OF SAMBHAR AND AJMER

According to the Agnikula theory about the origin of Rajputs, the Chauhans (Chahamanas) were descended from one of the four Rajput heroes, who emerged from the sacrificial-fire. The Chauhans established their stronghold at Sakambhari (Sambhar) in the beginning of the 7th century A.D. The Sakambhari branch was the most important of all the branches. Vasudeva started this branch. The early rulers of the dynasty were vassals of the Gurjara-Pratiharas. It was during the reign of Vigraharaja II that the Chauhans shook off the Pratihara yoke about 973 A. D. Ajayaraja, one of the rulers of the dynasty, was the founder of the city of Ajayameru or Ajmer. His son and successor Arnoraja tasted defeat at the hands of Jayasimha and Kumarapala, the Chalukya rulers of Gujarat. Arnoraja was succeeded by his son Vigraharaja IV (1153–64). He wrested Delhi from the Tomaras. He defeated the successors of Mahmud of Ghazni in a number of battles. The other rulers of the dynasty were Apara Gangeya, Prithviraja II (1164-70), Somesvara (1170-77) and Prithviraja III (1177-92). We get a detailed account of Prithviraja III from a Sanskrit poem *Prithviraja-vijaya* and a Hindi epic *Prithviraj-Raso*. The Hindi epic gives a graphic account of the elopement of Samyukta, the daughter of Gahadavala Jayachandra of Kanauj with Prithviraja III. He defeated Paramardi, the Chandella King and looted Mahoba and Kalinjar. He is said to have claimed a victory over Bhima II, the Chalukyan King of Gujarat. His nerves were put to the test when Muhammad of Ghor invaded India. He won a resounding victory over Muhammad in 1191 in the first battle of Tarain. But in the second battle of Tarain fought in 1192 Muhammad defeated and killed him. With his death, the Chahamana glory came to an end and his territories were occupied by the Muslims.

## 6. THE SOLANKIS OF ANHILVAD (GUJARAT)

According to the Agnikula theory about the origin of Rajputs, the Solankis (Chalukyas) were descended from one of the Rajput heroes who emerged from the sacrificial-fire. The decline in the power of the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas led to the rise of the Solankis of Anhilvad in the second half of the 10th century A. D. Apart from the three branches of the Chalukyas in the Deccan, the Solankis were the fourth branch that flourished in Northern India.

The historical founder of the dynasty was Mularaja I (A. D. 961–996), who carved out a kingdom in Gujarat with the capital at Anhilvad. He captured Saurashtra and Cutch. To preserve the hard-won kingdom he had to contend with the Chahamanas, the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani, Paramaras and Kalachuris. He was a Saivite and built two temples in the capital city. He abdicated the throne in favour of his son Chamundaraja (996–1010). The next ruler was Durlabharaja (1010–22).

During the reign of Bhimadeva I (1022-64), Mahmud of Ghazni sacked the famous Somnath temple. Bhimadeva's successor, Karnadeva I (1064–94) led a peaceful reign, building temples. The next ruler Jayasimha Siddharaja (1094–1144) defeated Yasovarman Paramara and captured Malwa. He maintained cordial relations with the Gahadavalas and the Kalachuris. But he adopted a hostile attitude towards the Chandellas. He was a great builder and patronised men of letters. Jayasimha was succeeded by Kumarapala (1144-73). He was a patron of the Jains. He prohibited the slaughter of animals in his country. He clashed with the Chahamans of Sakambhari, the Paramaras and the Kalachuris. Kumarapala was succeeded by Ajayapala (1173-76). He persecuted the Jains and pulled down many Jain temples. The next ruler was Mularaja II (1176–78) He was succeeded by Bhimadeva II (1178–1241). He defeated Muhammad of Ghor in 1178 when the latter invaded Gujarat. In 1196, Qutb-ud-din Aibak plundered Anhilvad. The final overthrow of the Solanki dynasty was effected by Ala-ud-din Khilji. In 1297 the army of Ala-ud-din besieged Anhilvad and King Karan II fled from the country and took shelter in Devagiri Gujarat was incorporated with the kingdom of Ala-ud-din Khilji.

## 7. THE GAHADAVALAS (GAHARWARS) OF KANAUJ ANE BENARAS

The Gahadavalas or Gaharwars rose to power towards the close of the eleventh century. Chandradeva (A. D 1080–1100) captured the throne of Kanauj from the Rashtrakuta ruler Gopala. He held sway over Benaras, Ayodhya and Kanauj. He made Benaras the second capital of the Gahadavalas, the first capital being Kanauj. He extended his territories to the south at the expense of the Kalachuris of Chedi. Chandradeva was succeeded by Madanachandra (1100-1114). The next ruler was Govindachandra (1114–55). The forty-two inscriptions of his rule prove beyond doubt that he ruled over an extensive

empire. The next ruler Vijayachandra (1155–70) was succeeded by his son Jayachandra (1170–93). His daughter Samyukta eloped with Prithviraj III Chauhan. Muhammad of Ghor defeated and killed him in the battle of Chandwar in 1193. With his death, the Gahadavala dynasty practically came to an end and his territories were occupied by the Muslims. But epigraphic evidence shows that Harichandra, the son of Jayachandra, ruled over some parts of his father's territories till 1200.

## 8. THE PALAS OF BENGAL AND BIHAR

Confusion and chaos prevailed in Bengal after the death of Sasanka, the Gauda King. In the latter half of the 8th century A. D., the Pala dynasty was ushered in Bengal by Gopala I (A. D. 765–769). With the assumption of rule by the Palas, anarchy came to an end in Bengal. Gopala I was succeeded by his son Dharmapala (769–815). His rule witnessed the triangular contest for supremacy in Northern India among the Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas and his own dynasty, the Palas. The city of Kanauj was coveted as the central prize by these rulers. Vatsaraja, the Pratihara King, succeeded in defeating Dharmapala. Both Vatsaraja and Dharmapala tasted defeat at the hands of Dhruva, the Rashtrakuta King. Indrayudha, one of the successors of Yasovarman of Kanauj, was defeated by Dharmapala in 810 He placed his protege Chakrayudha on the throne He was dethroned by Nagabhata II, the Gurjara-Pratihara King in 816 who then occupied Kanauj. The Rashtrakuta King Govinda III defeated Nagabhata II as well as Dharmapala. Dharmapala is said to be the hero of a hundred battles and he achieved noteworthy success in his military enterprises. He gave a new status and position to the dynasty. He assumed high sounding titles like *Paramesvara, Paramabhattaraka* and *Maharajadhiraja*. He was a great benefactor of Buddhism. He founded the Vikramasila monastery at Patharghata near Bhagalpur which served as a great centre of Buddhist learning and culture.

Dharmapala was succeeded by his son Devapala (815–854). He was an imperialist by instinct. He held the Pala empire intact and added to it new territories. He conquered Kamboja which lay to the north-west of the Punjab. He uprooted Utkala (Orissa) and conquered Pragjyotisha (Assam). He humbled the Hunas, Gurjaras and Dravidas. He was also a benefactor of Buddhism like his father. Balaputradeva, a King of the Sailendra dynasty of Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra) requested him to grant five villages to maintain a monastery built by

him at Nalanda. Devapala granted the request.

Devapala was succeeded by Vigrahapala I (854–857). He was of a religious bent of mind and he abdicated the throne in favour of his son Narayanapala (857–911). The Pala empire began to decline during the rule of these two mediocres. The rise of the Pratiharas under Mihira Bhoja and his son Mahendrapala and the advance of the Rashtrakutas into Pala territories inevitably brought about the decline. Taking advantage of the political condition, the petty chiefs who formerly owed allegiance to the Palas asserted their independence. Narayanapala lost Magadha (South Bihar) and for a time even North Bengal to the Pratiharas. He befriended the Rashtrakutas and before his death he re-established his authority over Bengal and Bihar. The downward phase of the dynasty, however, started during the rule of his three successors—Rajyapala, Gopala II and Vigrahapala II.

The fallen fortunes of the dynasty were revived by Mahipala I (992–1040). When Mahipala I came to the throne, the Palas had hold only over Magadha or South Bihar. His ancestral kingdom was occupied by the Kambojas and Chandras. Mahipala recovered a substantial portion of Bengal from the usurpers. Epigraphic evidence shows that he also recovered North Bihar. But he is said to have been defeated by Rajendra I Chola. Towards the close of his rule, he clashed with Gangeyadeva, the Kalachuri King and the latter wrested Benaras from him. Mahipala may be considered as the second founder of the Pala empire. He undertook the repair and construction of a large number of religious buildings.

Mahipala I was succeeded by his son Nayapala (1040–1055). Lakshmi-Karna, the Kalachuri King, invaded his territory. But peace was concluded. Mahaviragupta Yayati, a Somavamsi King of Kosala, also invaded the Pala territories. Nayapala was succeeded by his son Vigrahapala III (1055–81). Karna, the Kalachuri King, adopted an hostile attitude towards him. He invaded Gauda. But the war came to an end by a peace treaty and Vigrahapala III married a daughter of Karna. Vigrahapala III tasted a defeat at the hands of the Chalukyan prince Vikramaditya VI. Internal dissensions shook up the empire after the death of Vigrahapala III. His three sons, Mahipala II (1082), Surapala II (1083) and Ramapala (1084–1126) succeeded to the throne one after the other. Varendri (Northern Bengal) fell into the hands of a tribe called Kaivarta. With the help of his feudatories, Ramapala

defeated and killed Bhima, the third King of the Kaivarta family and recovered Varendri. He defeated the Varmans (Yadavas) of East Bengal. He came into clash with the Gahadavalas of Kanauj. He defeated Anantavarman of the Ganga dynasty. He captured Assam. He founded the city called Ramavati. The death of his maternal uncle who stood with him through thick and thin was too much for him to bear. He committed suicide by drowning himself in the Ganges.

During the rule of Kumarapala (1126–30), the son and successor of Ramapala, the feudatories asserted their independence. Nanyadeva, the King of Mithila, is said to have defeated Kumarapala. The Gahadavalas made inroads into Pala territories and wrested a part. Anantavarman, the ruler of the Ganga dynasty, invaded South and West Bengal and captured a vast territory extending upto Hooghly. Vijayasena of the Sena dynasty became very powerful in Northern Bengal. Vaidyadeva, the minister of Kumarapala, asserted his independence in Kamarupa. Surrounded by such hostile neighbours, the decline of the dynasty was only a foregone conclusion. The next ruler Madanapala (1130–50) was expelled from Northern Bengal by Vijayasena. But he, however, ruled over Magadha (South Bihar). His successor Govindapala (1150-62) carried on his precarious existence in the Gaya district surrounded by the Gahadavalas and the Senas. The family of Gopala I came to an inglorious end after a reign of four centuries.

## 9. THE SENAS OF BENGAL

After the collapse of the Pala dynasty, the Senas asserted their independence in Bengal. Samantasena (A.D. 1050-75) was the founder of the dynasty. He hailed from Karnataka and belonged to the Brahma-Kshatriya caste. The next ruler was his son Hemantasena (1075–97). He assumed the title *Maharajadhiraja*. His son and successor Vijayasena (1097-1159) was undoubtedly the greatest ruler of the Sena dynasty. He captured East Bengal from the Varmans. He expelled Madanapala from Northern Bengal and wrested his territory. He sent a naval expedition against the Gahadavalas of Kanauj. He invaded Mithila, Kamarupa and Kalinga.

Vijayasena was succeeded by his son Ballalasena (1159-85). He was an accomplished scholar. He was the author of *Danasagara* and an unfinished work *Adbhutasagara*. He was a Saivite. Ballalasena was succeeded by his son Lakshmanasena (1185-1206). He led a warlike career. He defeated the Kings of Kalinga, Kasi and Kamarupa. Epi-

graphic evidence shows that he erected pillars of victory at Puri, Kasi and Allahabad. Towards the end of his rule, the kingdom began to disintegrate due to internal dissensions and the advent of the Muslims under Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji. The Muslim free-booter Muhammad Khilji conquered Bengal in 1202 and captured North Bengal. The Senas fell a victim to Muslim aggression. Laksh-manasena, however, continued to rule over East Bengal and South Bengal. The successors of Lakshmanasena, continued their precarious existence at least upto 1245.

CHAPTER XV

# THE DELHI SULTANATE

## SECTION I

## THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF NORTHERN INDIA

### 1. INDIA ON THE EVE OF MAHMUD OF GHAZNI'S INVASION

#### Kashmir

India presented a gloomy picture of a house divided against itself on the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion. Kashmir was ruled by Hindus. The Karkota or Naga dynasty founded in the 2nd quarter of the 7th century A.D. was followed by the Utpala dynasty which came into power in the middle of the 9th century. Sankaravarman (883-902) was the greatest ruler of this dynasty. The Utpala dynasty came to an end in 949 with the murder of Sangramadeva, a minor King, by Parvagupta, the Chief Minister. His son, Kshemagupta (950-958), was a notorious debauchee. After his death, his queen Didda (958-1003) seized power. When Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Northern India, Didda was the ruler of Kashmir.

#### Kingdom of the Brahmana Shahis of Ohind & Bhatinda

The kingdom of the Brahmana Shahis extended from the river Chenab to the Hindukush mountains and included Kabul. The Arabs captured Kabul in 870. The loss of Kabul led them to transfer the capital to Ohind. Jayapala (965-1001) was the ruler when Mahmud of Ghazni attacked India. The kingdom of Jayapala extended from Jalalabad to Sirhind and from Kashmir to Multan. So he was practically the overlord of the Punjab. He shifted his capital from Ohind to Bhatinda. He came into clash with Subuktigin, the father of Mahmud of Ghazni, and lost to him Lamghan and Peshawar.

#### The Arab kingdoms of Multan and Sind

In 871 Sind shook off the yoke of the Caliph of Baghdad Yaqub-bin-Lais, the Governor of Sind, became its virtual ruler. After his death, Sind got divided into two—Multan or Upper Sind and Mansurah or Lower Sind. On the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion, Multan was ruled by Fateh Daud who belonged to the Karmathian dynasty. Sind proper was ruled by the Arabs.

#### Kanauj

The Gurjara-Pratiharas of Bhinmal and Kanauj came to power in

the second quarter of the 8th century. The Pratihara dynasty was the most important of all the dynasties of the Rajputs which held sway in Northern India. On the eve of the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni, Rajyapala was the ruler of Kanauj.

### Bengal

Bengal was ruled by the Palas. Mahipala I (992-1040) was the ruler of Bengal when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Northern India. As the country lay in a remote part, it did not fall a victim to Mahmud of Ghazni.

### Minor kingdoms in the North

The Chandellas of Bundelkhand, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Solankis of Anhilvad, the Paramaras of Malwa, the Palas of Bengal and the Chauhans of Sambhar and Ajmer were small ruling houses which held sway in Northern India in their respective territories.

### The kingdoms of the Deccan

In the South, the hey-day of the Chalukyas of Vatapi, the Pallavas of Kanchi and the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed was already over. The Later Western Chalukyas held sway at Kalyani and the Eastern Chalukyas at Vengi on the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion. The Cholas were at the height of their power under Rajaraja the Great. The power of the Pandyas in the extreme south had already declined.

### Social and religious conditions

The comparative peace which the country enjoyed for nearly three centuries after the Arab conquest of Sind bred a leisurely class of people. As there was no common danger which threatened the country, patriotism was at the lowest ebb. Proper security measures were not undertaken to defend the north-western frontiers of India. The few kingdoms which held sway in different parts of Northern India never attempted to unite together in times of emergency. On the contrary, they got more and more weakened by internal dissensions and quarrels. It is true that the Rajput kingdoms tried their best to arrest the onward march of the Muslims. But it was not a concerted action. The caste system became very rigid. Widows were not permitted to remarry especially among the higher classes. Meat-eating and drinking were considered as social vices. The Brahmins occupied a high place in society. The Rajputs were in no way considered less inferior to the Brahmins. Affluence bred indolence and moral degradation. The *devadasi* system or the practice of keeping a number of dancing girls

in temples corrupted the minds of the people and that led to moral degeneration.

Hinduism was the most dominant religion. Buddhism and Jainism also flourished in the country. In Sind and Multan occupied by the Arabs, Islam was the dominant religion. The non-Muslims had to pay *jizya*. Though they persecuted the non-Muslims in the beginning, afterwards they followed a policy of religious toleration. The Hindu rulers in general did not persecute the people professing other faiths. But there were stray cases of persecutions. But such instances were only exceptions rather than the general rule.

After the Gupta period, the creative talents of the people in art, architecture and literature became less active. As the various kingdoms in Northern India were busy in establishing the supremacy of the one over the other, there was not much scope for the development of art and literature. In the south, on the contrary, the period witnessed remarkable progress in art, architecture and literature during the rule of the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed, the Pallavas of Kanchi and the Cholas. The country was studded with a number of temples. A boost was given to Sanskrit literature in particular and the vernacular literature in general.

## Economic condition

India abounded in riches. It was no wonder that the fabulous wealth of the country attracted Mahmud of Ghazni 17 times. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. But they were not indifferent to industries. On the whole, the people enjoyed prosperity due to the cheapness of prices and easy living conditions. But the economic life of the people was frequently disrupted by the frequent wars. With regard to the standard of living of the people, the awe-breathing distance between the tillers of the soil and the rich remained unaltered. The rich rolled in luxuries and the poor groaned under the weight of oppressive taxation. The life of the people in the villages was one of primitive simplicity and contentment. The bureaucracy in course of time became corrupt beyond measure. It became degenerate. Its wasteful extravagance led to moral degradation and economic bankruptcy.

## 2. MAHMUD OF GHAZNI

### Rise of Ghazni

The Arab conquest of Northern India resulted only in the annexation of Sind and Multan. The Turks completed the work left unfinished by the Arabs. When the power of the Caliph of Baghdad began to decline, Spain and Egypt asserted their independence. The growth of a number of minor dynasties in Iraq, Persia and Turkestan weakened the power of the Caliph. Alptigin founded the kingdom of Ghazni in 963. He died in 969. He was succeeded by his three generals, Bilkatigin (969–977), Pirey (977) and Sabuktigin (977–997). Sabuktigin came into clash with Jayapala (965–1001), the ruler of the Brahmana Shahi kingdom. The kingdom of Jayapala extended from Jalalabad to Sirhind and from Kashmir to Multan. So he was practically the overlord of the Punjab. In the war that ensued, Sabuktigin defeated Jayapala and the latter purchased peace by promising to pay a huge war indemnity, 50 elephants and the surrender of some forts and towns on the frontier. As he did not honour the promises, a second war became inevitable. After the second war, Sabuktigin wrested from Jayapala, Lamghan and Peshawar.

### Accession of Mahmud of Ghazni

Sabuktigin died in 997. A biref war of succession ensued between Ismail and Mahmud, the two sons of Sabuktigin. Mahmud became victorious. He occupied the throne of Ghazni in 998. Before he launched into a career of conquest, he took a vow to wage a 'Holy war' against the Hindus every year.

### Mahmud's Indian expeditions

(1) The conquests of Mahmud into the heart of Hindustan was heralded by some minor inroads on the border territories in 1000 which resulted in the subjugation of some frontier towns and a few forts.

(2) He led an expedition against Jayapala, the Brahmana Shahi ruler of the Punjab in 1001–1002. He defeated Jayapala and imposed on him humiliating terms. This was too much for him to bear and he committed suicide after nominating his son, Anandapala, in 1002.

(3) In 1004-1005, he led an expedition against Biji Rai of Bhera and annexed the territory.

(4) In 1005–1006, he led an expedition against the heretics of Multan. Daud, the ruler of Multan, appealed to Anandapala for help.

As Anandapala tried to block the passage of Mahmud, the latter defeated. Anandapala and found his way to Multan. Daud, the Muslim heretic ruler of Multan, submitted after the siege of the city for 7 days. He was allowed to rule over Multan on his promise to pay an annual tribute and to follow the sacred tenets of the Islamic faith. As the Sultan received the news of the invasion of the northern part of his kingdom by a Turkish adventurer, he returned post-haste to Ghazni to set matters right after entrusting the affairs of Hindustan to Sukhapala, the grandson of Jayapala, who had already become a convert to the Islamic faith under the name Nawasa Shah.

(5) As Nawasa Shah proclaimed his independence, Mahmud returned from Ghazni to chastise the rebel. He was captured in 1007 and imprisoned for life.

(6) The next expedition was directed against Anandapala in 1008, Anandapala made an appeal to the neighbouring Kings and they came to his succour with men and materials. Against such a formidable army, Mahmud won a signal victory. Thousands of Hindus were slain. The rest of the army fled in pell mell. Mahmud gave a hot chase to the retreating army. He stormed the fortress of Nagarkot or Kangra and after three days' resistance it fell. An immense booty fell into his hands.

(7) The next expedition was in the form of a demonstration against Anandapala in 1009. Without offering any resistance, he submitted and promised to pay an annual tribute. In 1010, he captured Ghor.

(8) In 1010, he made another expedition to Multan and killed a number of Muslim heretics. He re-established his power in Multan in 1011.

(9) In 1011-1012, he plundered Thaneswar and broke the idols in the temple.

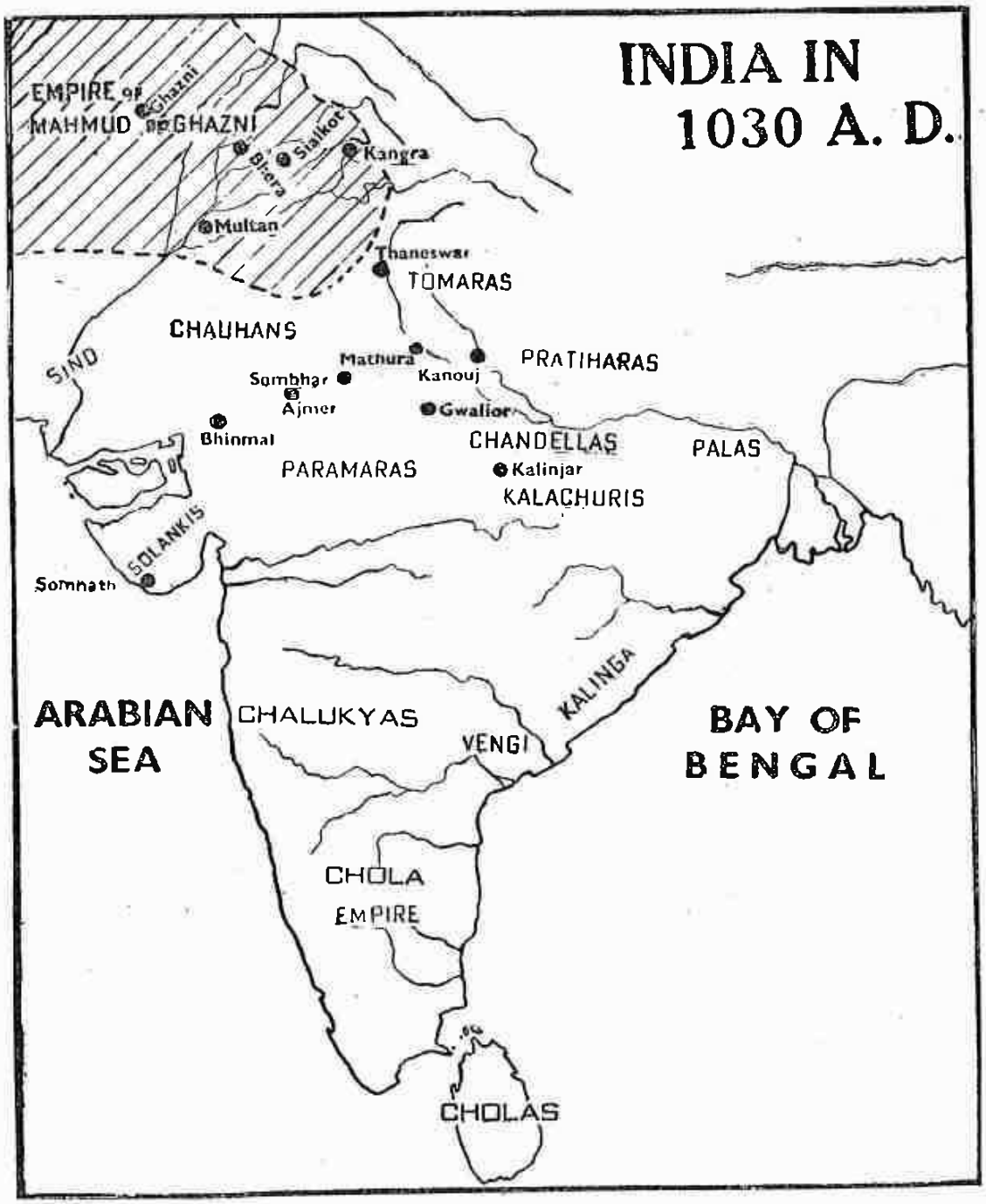
(10) In 1013–1014, he led an expedition against Trilochanapala, the successor of Anandapala. He defeated Trilochanapala. But he escaped to Kashmir. An immense booty fell into the hands of Mahmud.

(11) His expedition against Kashmir in 1015–1016 ended in failure.

(12) In 1018–1019, he directed an expedition against Mathura. He broke the idols of the temple and carried away an immense booty. He proceeded against Kanauj. Rajyapala, the Gurjara-Pratihara King, fled from the capital. Mahmud sacked the city and an immense booty

fell into his hands.

(13) In 1020-21, he led an expedition against Vidyadhara, the Chandella prince, who killed Rajyapala for his cowardice. Trilochana-




pala also joined him. Mahmud had a very tough time with Vidyadhara But according to one version, Vidyadhara fled from the country on seeing the army of Mahmud. Then, he proceeded against Trilochanapala, and defeated him.

(14) In 1021-1022, he led an expedition for the second time against Kashmir. But again he failed. Then he proceeded towards the Punjab and annexed it.

(15) In 1021-1022, he led another expedition against Vidyadhara. On the way he got an immense booty from the chief of Gwalior. Then he besieged Kalinjar. Vidyadhara submitted and purchased peace after surrendering 300 elephants and other valuable presents

(16) The most famous expedition of Mahmud was directed against the temple of Somnath in Kathiawar in 1025-26. On seeing the army, Bhimadeva I Solanki fled from his capital. Mahmud entered the ramparts, broke the idols in the temple and carried away an immense booty.

(17) His last expedition in 1027 was against the Jats who insulted his army while returning from Somnath. He defeated the Jats and carried away an immense booty. He died in 1030 after carving out an empire consisting of Afghanistan, a major portion of Persia and the Punjab.

## Character of Mahmud

There is no denying the fact that Mahmud was a great figure in the history of Islam. According to Mohammad Habib, "the private life of the Sultan certainly shows him to be anything but the paragon of virtue idolised by Muslim fanatics". His private life was pure. He took to four wives which was quite in accordance with the *Koranic* maximum of four wives which a person could have. He strictly adhered to the sacred tenets of Islam. He was kind and affectionate to his relatives. The *jihad* or holy war carried on by Mahmud against the Hindus, reveals his religious fanaticism. His love of gold and thirst for glory knew no bounds.

## Estimate

Mahmud was a great King. He was a great general and soldier. By dint of his ability, he carved out a big empire. He made no less than 17 conquests in India and extended the sphere of influence of Islam. But he was "no constructive or farseeing statesman". The glitter of gold attracted him more than the consolidation of the conquerred territories. His administrative arrangements lacked stability and permanence. He was a great patron of art and letters. His court was adorned by luminaries like Al Beruni, Firdausi, Unsuri and Farrukhi. The *Shah-nama* of Fridausi is a priceless record. Mahmud founded

at Ghazni, a university, a library and a museum. He beautified Ghazni by erecting a number of palaces and mosques. He glorified Islam and did gross injustice to Hinduism. Being an orthodox Sunni Muslim, he never allowed his Muslim subjects to deviate from the path of Islam. His wanton destruction of Hindu temples may be interpreted as a part of his work in the course of his military expeditions. To the impartial enquirer "the Sultan is a born leader of men, a just and upright ruler, an intrepid and gifted soldier, a dispenser of justice, a patron of letters and deserves to be ranked among the greatest personalities of the world".

### Successors of Mahmud

The Yamini dynasty to which Mahmud belonged endured after him for a century and a half. Immediately after his death, a war of succession ensued between his two sons—Masud and Muhammad. Masud (1030-1040) emerged victorious in the war. He blinded and imprisoned his brother. Masud tasted a defeat at the hands of the Seljuqs at Merv in 1040. He fled to Lahore. But he was captured and handed over to his blind brother Muhammad. Masud was put to death in 1041. Maudud, the son of Masud, succeeded in putting to death Muhammad and his sons. Maudud who ruled from 1040 to 1049 was an incompetent ruler. He was succeeded by a number of weak rulers. The last ruler of the Yamini dynasty was Khusrau Malik. Ghiyas-ud-din Ghor captured Ghazni in 1173. Muhammad Ghor imprisoned Khusrau Malik in 1186 and with that the Yamini dynasty came to an end.

## 3. MUHAMMAD OF GHOR

After the fall of the Ghaznavid power, the Ghoris asserted their power. The Shansbani dynasty to which Muhammad of Ghor belonged came to power in the 10th century A. D. The Ghoris ruled over the district of Ghor situated between Ghazni and Herat. During the reign of Mahmud of Ghazni, the Ghors were the vassals to the Ghaznavids. After the death of Mahmud, they steadily rose in power and position. Ghiyas-ud-din Ghor captured Ghazni in 1173. He appointed his brother Muiz-ud-din Muhammad or Shihab-ud-din, better known to fame as Muhammad of Ghor, the Governor of Ghazni. Though Muhammad ruled as an independent monarch, he maintained cordial relations with his brother and accepted his suzerainty.

### Muhammad's Indian expeditions

Muhammad captured Multan from the Karmathians in 1175. In

the same year, he captured the strong fortress of Uch. He suffered a crushing defeat in 1178 at the hands of Bhimadeva II, the Chalukya ruler of Gujarat. He forced the Sumra ruler of Lower Sind to accept his overlordship in 1182. He captured Peshawar in 1179, Sialkot in 1185 and Lahore in 1186. He imprisoned Khusrau Malik in 1186 and put an end to the Yamini dynasty. Khusrau Malik and his son were put to death in 1192.

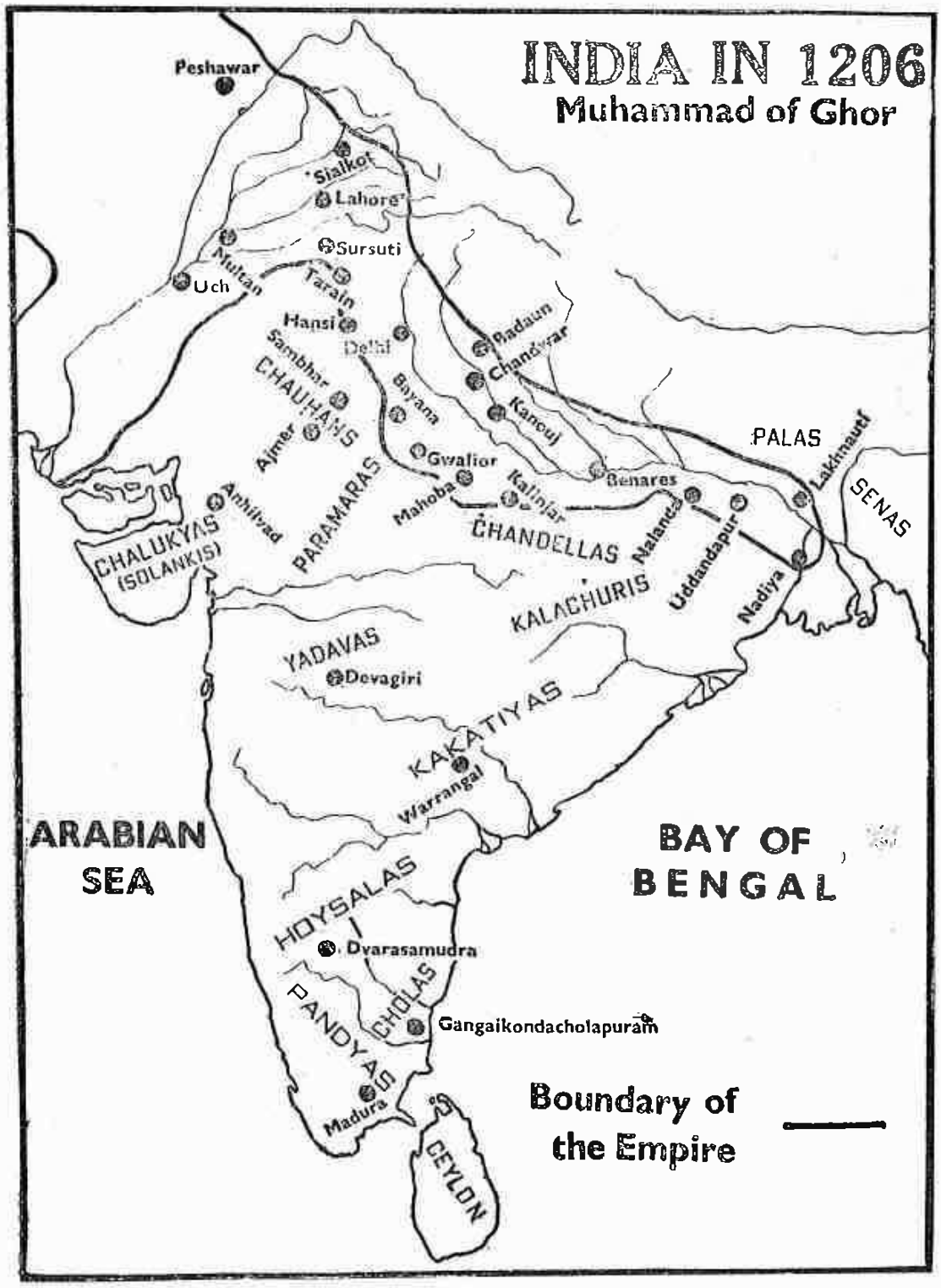
The Chahamanas (Chauhans) of Sakambhari (Sambhar) under Prithviraj III proved more formidable than the other rivals of Muhammad. Prithviraj III won a resounding victory over Muhammad in 1191 in the first battle of Tarain. But in the second battle of Tarain fought in 1192, Muhammad defeated and killed him. With his death the Chahamana glory came to an end. After the battle, Muhammad captured the important cities of Hansi, Kuhram, Sursuti and Sirhind. He plundered Ajmer and demolished the temples. After entrusting the affairs of Hindustan to his trusted slave Qutb-ud-din Aibak Muhammad returned to Ghazni.

Qutb-ud-din Aibak captured Baran and Meerut in 1192. In 1193, he captured Delhi from the Chauhans. Muhammad of Ghor returned to India in 1193 and defeated and killed Jayachandra Gahadavala in the battle of Chandwar. He plundered Asni and Benaras and returned home. As the Rajputs fomented trouble in Ajmer, it was annexed by Aibak in or shortly after 1194. In 1195, Muhammad returned to India and captured Bayana and Gwalior. The Mher tribes of Ajmer in league with the Chalukyas of Gujarat revolted against the Muslims. Aibak defeated Bhimadeva II in 1196 and plundered Anhilvad. In 1197, Aibak captured Badaun, Chandwar and Kanauj. He was not able to establish complete control over Rajputana. Aibak captured in 1204 Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho from Paramardi, the Chandella ruler of Bundelkhand.

## The capture of Bihar and Bengal

Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji, an ordinary general under Aibak, undertook the task of conquering the eastern lands. After the fall of the power of the Gahadavalas of Kanauj and Benaras, he got a free access into Bihar. He captured the university towns of Uddandapur, Vikramasila and Nalanda. He demolished the Buddhist monasteries. The comparative ease with which he conquered Bihar goaded him to effect the conquest of Bengal. Bengal was at that time ruled by Lakshmanasena, an imbecile King. Khilji destroyed Nadiya,

one of the capital cities. He captured in 1202 North Bengal from the ruler. Lakshmanasena, however, continued to rule over east and south




Bengal. Khilji made Lakhnauti or Gaur his headquarters. He undertook an expedition to Tibet which settled his doom. The expedition proved to be a disastrous one. Though he managed to return to the

headquarters, he was murdered by one of his lieutenants in 1206.

### Last days of Muhammad Ghor

On the death of Ghiyas-ud-din in 1202, Muhammad ascended the throne of Ghor. He stretched his gaze towards the Oxus region and invaded Khwarizm. But he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Shah of Khwarizm at Andhkhud in 1205. The disaster was not without its repercussions in India Multan proclaimed its independence under a new King. The Gakkars and other tribes rose in revolt and plundered Lahore. Muhammad recovered Multan and put down the revolt of the Gakkars with an iron hand. After establishing order, he proceeded to Ghazni. But on the way, he was stabbed to death in 1206.

### Estimate

Muhammad of Ghor was not a free-booter like Mahmud of Ghazni Mahmud of Ghazni swept over the plains of Hindustan like an avalanche, carried away whatever he could and rest contented himself with the ill-gotten wealth. Further, his conquests had a religious colour. Muhammad of Ghor was not a fanatic. He stands at a higher plane than that of Mahmud of Ghazni. His campaigns had a political background. His conquests were more sweeping and permanent than those of Ghazni's. He realised the rotten political condition in India and carved out an empire. He was not only a great general but also a great statesman. He consolidated his couquests. Aibak, who succeeded him as the first Sultan of Delhi, had not to start life from a scratch and had at least a dead man to propel the boat.

## SECTION II

## THE SLAVE DYNASTY

### 1. QUTB-UD-DIN AIBAK (1206–1210)

### Early life

The Delhi Sultanate begins with the rule of Sultan Qutb-ub-din Aibak in A. D. 1206. Born free, he became a slave when he was a boy. He was purchased by the *Qazi* of Nishapur. After his master's death, the sons sold him to Muhammad of Ghor. His courage and manly bearing and generosity attracted the attention of his new master. By dint of his ability, he rose to the position of the Master of the Stables. After the second battle of Tarain in 1192, he became the trusted general of Muhammad for his further conquests in Hindustan. He became his Viceroy for Hindustan. He captured Baran and Meerut in 1192. In

the next year, he captured Delhi from the Chauhans. As the Rajputs fomented trouble in Ajmer, it was annexed in or shortly after 1194. He defeated Bhimadeva II Chalukya and plundered Anhilvad in 1196. In 1197, he captured Badaun, Chandwar and Kanauj. He was not able to establish control over Rajputana. He captured in 1202, Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho from Paramardi, the Chandella ruler of Bundelkhand. His general, Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bhaktyar captured Bihar and North Bengal.

## Accession

As Muhammad Ghor died without a male issue, Qutb-ud-din Aibak, the Viceroy of Hindustan, succeeded to his vast possessions in India. He assumed no imperial titles. But to all intents and purposes, he was the Sultan of Delhi. He strengthened his position long before his accession to the throne by matrimonial alliances. He gave his daughter in marriage to Iltutmish and his sister to Nasir-ud-din Qubachah, the Governor of Multan and Uch. He married the daughter of Taj-ud-din Yildiz, the Governor of Kirman.

## Qutb-ud-din as Sultan

As soon as he came to power, Qutb-ud-din was surrounded by difficulties from different quarters. The death of Muhammad Ghor gave a free-hand to the Shah of Khwarizm to extend his dominions at the expense of the Ghori kingdom. Nasir-ud-din Qubachah and Taj-ud-din Yildiz posed as rival claimants to the throne of Delhi. The Chandellas and the Gahadavalas regained their lost position. Bengal and Bihar were already caught up in the grip of a revolution.

Taj-ud-din Yildiz who occupied the throne of Ghazni after the death of Muhammad Ghor was forced to leave Ghazni in 1208 due to the pressure from the Shah of Khwarizm and seek asylum in the Punjab. Anticipating danger from Yildiz, Aibak took up his permanent station at Lahore and took effective steps to prevent Yildiz from getting a foothold in the Punjab. As he feared that the vacant throne at Ghazni may invite danger from the Shah of Khwarizm, he occupied Ghazni in 1208. But the citizens of Ghazni preferred Yildiz to Aibak and extended an invitation to him to come back to Ghazni Thereupon Yildiz returned to Ghazni. Aibak beat a retreat to Lahore without opposing Yildiz. He did not get himself entangled in the Central Asian politics. He evolved order out of chaos in Bengal, and appointed Ali Mardan as the Governor of Bengal. In the midst of his preoccupations in stabilising the infant Delhi Sultanate, he died in 1210 in a polo accident.

### Estimate

Aibak won laurels during his viceroyalty and rested on it during his royalty. The Delhi Sultanate did not advance an inch further during his reign as *de facto* ruler. During the short span of five years, he had no time to evolve a sound administrative system. In the midst of his preoccupations, he found time to extend his patronage to men of letters. His devotion to Islam is commendable. He built two mosques, one at Delhi and another at Ajmer. His munificence earned for him the title, *Lakhbaksha* (giver of lakhs). His greatest achievement was that he set the ball of the Delhi Sultanate rolling.

## 2. ILTUTMISH (1211–1236)

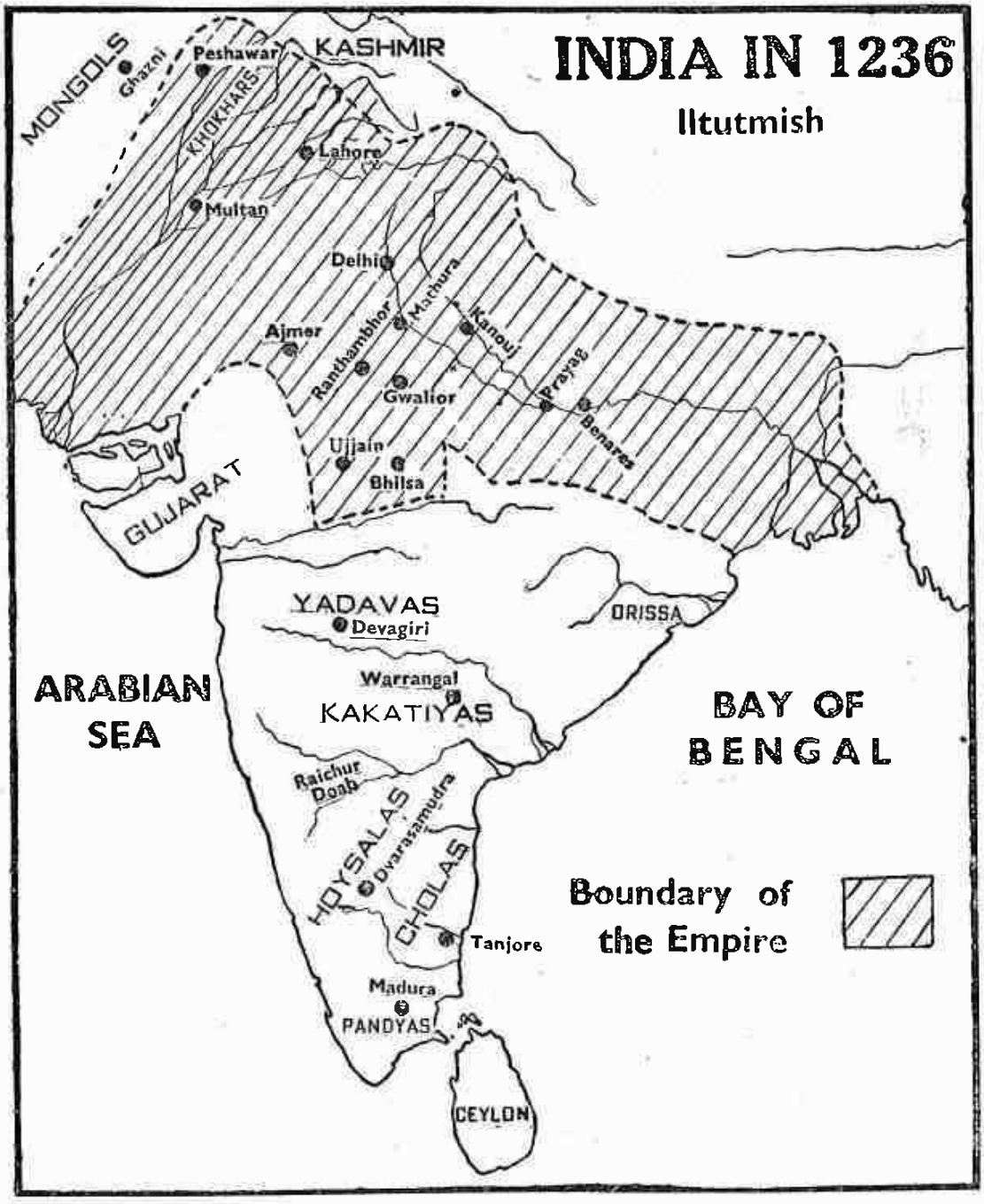
### Early life

Shams-ud-din Iltutmish hailed from a respectable Turkish family of the Ilbari tribe. He was sold a slave by his jealous brothers to Jamal-ud-din. Ultimately Qutb-ud-din became his master. Iltutmish possessed a handsome appearance. By dint of his ability, he rose from position to position. After the capture of Gwalior, he took charge of the fort. Subsequently, he became the Governor of Baran. He became the son-in-law of Aibak and afterwards became the Governor of Badaun. After the death of Aibak, his son, Aram (1210–1211) succeeded to the throne. But the choice of the nobility fell on Iltutmish. He defeated Aram and captured the throne in 1211. On the eve of his accession, Hindustan was parcelled out into four independent principalities. Bengal was under the control of Ali Mardan Khilji. Iltutmish held sway over Delhi and the neighbouring regions. Qubachah was the overlord of Multan. Lahore was held alternately by Qubachah and Yildiz. The Rajput chiefs asserted their independence in Jalor, Ranthambhor, Ajmer and Gwalior.

### Suppression of Yildiz and Qubachah

Yildiz and Qubachah were the two formidable rivals of Iltutmish. Yildiz who occupied the throne of Ghazni treated Iltutmish as his vassal. Taking stock of the situation which faced Iltutmish at home, he feigned subordination. In the meantime, he strengthened his position at Delhi. Yildiz expelled Qubachah from Lahore and practically occupied the whole of the Punjab. Iltutmish who was till then playing a waiting game marched against Yildiz and defeated him in the battle of Tarain in 1215. Yildiz was taken captive and subsequently put to death. Thus he got rid of the danger from Ghazni. In the meantime,

Qubachah reoccupied Lahore. Iltutmish avoided an encounter with him and allowed Lahore to remain in his hands. But scenting a breach of agreement, he marched against him. Qubachah fled to Uch and without any resistance Iltutmish annexed Lahore in 1217. But the




final fall of Qubachah came only in 1228.

## The Mongol menace

The onward march of the Mongols of Tartary under Chingiz Khan posed a serious threat to the infant Delhi Sultanate. Chingiz

Khan ravaged China, Central Asia and Western Asia. He pulled down the kingdom of Khwarizm and forced the crown-prince Jalal-ud-din to seek asylum in the Punjab. The Mongols hung threateningly over the borders of Hindustan and kept a vigilant watch on the fugitive prince. Jalal-ud-din earnestly entreated Iltutmish to help him in his miserable plight. On grounds of diplomacy, he turned down the request. Thereupon he allied with the Gakkar tribes and wrought havoc on the kingdom of Qubachah in the Sind valley. The Mongols also caused much devastation in Sind and Western Punjab. Jalal-ud-din escaped to Persia in 1224 Fortunately for Iltutmish the Mongols did not penetrate into the interior of India due to the hot climate in the Punjab. Thus a seemingly dangerous and grave Mongol menace vanished from the scene.

## The fall of Qubachah

The exit of Jalal-ud-din left Qubachah in possession of Multan and Sind. Taking advantage of the decline in the power of Qubachah, Iltutmish recovered Lahore, attacked him from two directions and captured Multan and Uch. Qubachah sought asylum in the fortress of Bhakkar. When he was forced to surrender, he plunged into the Indus and drowned himself in 1228. Iltutmish constituted the newly conquered territories into the three provinces of Lahore, Multan and Sind.

## Conquests of Iltutmish

Ali Mardan Khan Khilji asserted his independence in Bengal. But the Khilji nobles killed him in 1212 and placed on the throne Hisam-ud-din Iwaz. He captured Bihar. In 1225 Iltutmish marched against him, recovered Bihar and forced him to accept his overlordship. But soon after his departure, Iwaz declared his independence and occupied Bihar. Thereupon, Iltutmish sent his son, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the then Governor of Oudh, against him. He defeated and killed Iwaz in 1226. Bengal once again became a province under the Sultanate. Nasir-ud-din died in 1229. Another chief by name Balka Khilji asserted his independence in Bengal. Iltutmish led an expedition and defeated and killed him in 1229. Bengal was re-annexed to the Delhi Sultanate.

The Mongol menace provided excellent opportunities for the Hindu powers to revive their power in different parts of the country. Iltutmish started his operations in Rajputana in 1226. He established his authority in Ranthambhor, Mandawar, Jalor, Bayana, Thangir, Ajmer

and Nagaur. In the southern frontier, he captured Gwalior. In the Doab region, he re-established his authority in Badaun, Kanauj and Benaras. He conducted an expedition to Malwa in 1234–35 and plundered Bhilsa and Ujjain. In the southern frontier, the Chalukyas of Gujarat, the Paramaras of Malwa and the Chandellas of Bundelkhand still held sway. After a hectic career, Iltutmish died in 1236.

### Estimate

Iltutmish has justly been regarded by the historians as one of the most distinguished of the early Sultans of Delhi. The confirmation of the royal title which he received from the Caliph in 1229, legalised the position of the Delhi Sultans. In the task of empire-building, Muhammad Ghor supplied the skeleton, Qutb-ud-din infused the flesh and it was the task of Iltutmish to supply the blood and make it live. His greatest achievement was that he started a dynastic monarchy. He saved the infant Turkish kingdom from extinction. He was a patron of art and letters. He built the Qutb Minar in honour of the Muslim saint, Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki. Contemporary historian Minhaj-us-Siraj praises his virtues in the following words: "Never was a sovereign of such exemplary faith, of such kindness and reverence towards recluses, devotees, divines and doctors of religion and law, from the mother of creation ever enwrapped in swaddling bands of dominion".

## 3. THE SUCCESSORS OF ILTUTMISH

### Rukn-ud-din Firoz (1236)

Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish, predeceased his father in 1229. As Iltutmish had no confidence in his second son, Rukn-ud-din, he nominated his daughter Raziyya to the throne. But after the death of Iltutmish, his decision was revoked and the nobles placed on the throne Rukn-ud-did Firoz. He was a notorious debauchee and left the affairs of the empire to be managed by his mother Turkan. Her headstrong temperament landed the country in troubles. Saif-ud-din Hasan Qarlugh, the ruler of Ghazni, Kirman and Baniyan, invaded Sind and Uch. The Governors of Oudh, Badaun, Multan, Hansi and Lahore adopted an independent attitude. Popular discontent against the rule of Firoz mounted up. Raziyya skilfully instigated the feelings of an infuriated mob in Delhi. Shah Turkan was imprisoned and Firoz was captured and put to death in 1236. Raziyya became the new ruler.

## Raziyya (1236-1240)

The accession of Raziyya to the throne was openly defied by the Governors of Badaun, Multan, Hansi and Lahore and by Nizam-ul-Mulk Muhammad Junaidi, the *Wazir* of Rukn-ud-din But she cleverly sowed the seeds of dissension among them and foiled their attempts. The undue partiality and favours shown to Yaqut, an Abyssinian slave, roused the jealousy of 'the Forty', a military brotherhood of Turkish nobles. The elevation of Yaqut to the position of the Master of the Stables undermined the prestige of 'the Forty', as they had hitherto monopolised the key posts. The orthodox section of the Muslims viewed with great concern a woman dressed in the attire of men and transacting business in the court. A conspiracy was in the air to dethrone Raziyya. Kabir Khan Ayaz, the Governor of the Punjab, revolted against her. But the revolt was easily put down Altuniya, the Governor of Bhatinda, was the second Amir to revolt. Raziyya marched against him only to find herself a captive in his hands. The conspirators then placed on the throne Muizz-ud-din Bahram, a younger son of Iltutmish in 1240. As Altuniya did not get a fair reward for staging the successful *coup*, he married Raziyya and espoused her cause. The new couple marched towards Delhi. Altuniya was defeated by the imperial forces. During the return march towards Bhatinda, Altuniya and Raziyya were murdered by Hindu robbers.

## Estimate

In the words of the contemporary historian Minhaj-us-Siraj: "Raziyya was a great sovereign, sagacious, just, beneficent, the patron of the learned, a dispenser of justice, the cherisher of her subjects and of warlike talent, and was endowed with all the admirable attributes and qualifications necessary for a king; but as she did not attain the destiny in her creation, of being computed among men, of what advantage were all these excellent qualifications to her?"

## Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah (1240–1242)

Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah, a younger son of Iltutmish, came to the throne after the fall of Raziyya. During his rule, 'the Forty' gained the upper hand and weakened the country by internal dissensions. To this was added the external threat. The Mongols swept over the Indus valley and captured Lahore. The imperial army despatched to the help of the Governor of Lahore returned without accomplishing anything due to the intrigues of the *Wazir*, Nizam-ul-Mulk. The enraged

army officers who were already poisoned by the *Wazir* turned their wrath against the Sultan and captured and murdered him in 1242

### Ala-ud-din Masud Shah (1242–1246)

The new Sultan Ala-ud-din Masud Shah was a very young son of Rukn-ud-din Firoz. He was a mere tool in the hands of 'the Forty'. Balban became the most dominating figure in 'the Forty'. The Mongols reappeared and occupied Multan and Uch. But they fled when news reached them that Balban was coming at the head of a large army.

### Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (1246–1265)

Masud soon fell a victim to the conspiracy of 'the Forty' headed by Balban. He was dethroned and Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, an younger son of Iltutmish, was placed on the throne. While he was the *de jure* ruler, the *de facto* ruler was Balban.

## 4. GHIYAS-UD-DIN BALBAN (1265-1287)

### Early life

Like Iltutmish, Ghiyas-ud-din Balban also hailed from a respectable Turkish family of the Ilbari tribe. He was taken captive by the Mongols who sold him as a slave to Khwaja Jamal-ud-din of Basra. Ultimately, Iltutmish became his master. He was enlisted in the corps of forty slaves. He became the *Amir-i-Shikar* (Lord of the Hunt) during the reign of Raziyya. When the star of Raziyya fell on evil days, he joined the conspirators and enthroned Bahram. The Sultan rewarded him with the fief of Rewari. The district of Hansi was added to it as a reward by Masud for enthroning him. Balban became the dominating figure in 'the Forty'. When the Mongols besieged Uch in 1245, the timely action of Balban forced them to raise the siege. His relentless activities earned for him the title Ulugh Khan (Puissant Lord). He inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mongols. He effected the overthrow of Masud and enthroned Nasir-ud-din. Balban became the *de facto* ruler.

Balban became the deputy to the Sultan. He filled the high offices of the state with his relatives. He further strengthened his position by giving his daughter in marriage to the Sultan. While Balban exercised full regal powers, quelling rebellions, nipping conspiracies and repelling Mongol invasions, the Sultan led the life of a dervish copying the *Koran*. The ascendancy of Balban roused the jealousy of a section of the nobles and they hatched a plot to get rid of him. The Sultan fell into the trap of the conspirators and Balban was dismissed from service. Pro-

motions, demotions and displacements followed. Balban, however, suffered only a temporary eclipse from 1253 to 1254. The Turkish nobles rallied under his banner and proceeded towards the capital city. As the might of Balban was too formidable, the Sultan yielded and Balban was reinstated in 1254.

Balban strained every nerve to restore order and consolidate the authority of the Sultan. The province of Bengal wavered in its allegiance to the central authority for a long time. By clever manoeuvres, Balban reasserted the central authority in Bengal in 1257. Within the next three or four years, Bengal became independent. The central authority in the north-west continued to remain shaky due to constant Mongol inroads. The Governor of Multan asserted his independence and became a feudatory to the Mongol ruler of Persia. The Governor of Multan in league with his counterpart in Oudh made a bold bid to capture Delhi. But the argus-eyed Balban foiled the attempt. The Mongol menace proved too formidable. They established their stronghold in the Punjab. The menace was a constant bug-bear throughout the rule of Nazir-ud-din.

The Hindu chieftains also tried their best to regain their lost glory. Balban subjugated the rebellious Hindu Chiefs of the Doab. Many people were mercilessly butchered and women and children were carried away as slaves. He suppressed the rebellious tribes of Mewat. He conquered Ranthambhor, crushed a rising of the Hindu Chief of Kalinjar and led an expedition against the Chandella Chief of Kalinjar. When Nasir-ud-din died in 1265, Balban assumed the reins of government.

## Exaltation of Monarchy

Balban's long association in the government of the State convinced him that the Turkish nobility was the root cause for undermining the prestige of the Sultan. Barani gives a graphic account of the pitiable condition into which the State had fallen in the following words: "Fear of the governing, which is the basis of all good government, and the source of the glory and splendour of States, had departed from the hearts of all men, and the country had fallen into a wretched condition". Balban immediately set himself to the task of restoring the prestige and the power of the Sultan. He told his son, Bughra Khan, that "The heart of the King is the special repository of God's favour and in this he has no equal among mankind". He introduced new customs and manners to exalt the kingly office. He firmly believed

that despotism alone could ensure an orderly form of government and could exact blind obedience from the people. As familiarity breeds contempt, he cultivated dignified reserve and treated the nobles with studied neglect. He intoduced Persian ceremonial in the Court which added charm and dignity to the kingly office. He disallowed the practice of drinking wine by the nobles and officials. He himself gave up wine and dissociated himself from all jovial parties. Even laughter was taboo in the court. Thus he elevated the status of the king from the neglect into which it had fallen to celestial heights.

### Destruction of the Forty

Balban knew very well that the Turkish nobility with the Forty Slaves at its apex was a source of constant danger. 'The Forty' monopolised all power in its hands and occupied the key positions. It made the Sultan a magnificent cipher. 'The Forty' which came into existence during the time of Iltutmish gained ground during the rule of his successors. To lower the prestige of 'the Forty', Balban elevated junior Turks to higher positions. Brutal punishments were meted out to the members of the Forty for administrative blunders and acts of cruelty. He pulled out the poisonous fangs of most of the members of 'the Forty' and undermined their prestige in the eyes of the people.

### Espionage

Balban organised an efficient spy system. The innumerable spies and writers whom the Sultan employed informed him about the day-to-day happenings in nook and corner of the country. Cruel punishments were meted out to the spies if they failed in their duty. The well-disciplined and vigilant spy system unearthed many a dark doing and thus served as a powerful engine to propagate and preserve the despotism of Balban.

### Military reforms

Balban reorganised the army with more and better soldiers Ever-since the time of Iltutmish, the soldiers received grants of lands in return for military service. Such lands were enjoyed by the successors of the soldiers who were in most cases ill-suited for the discharge of military service. Balban conducted an enquiry into their service-tenures and found that the lands came to stay in the possession of old men, widows and orphans. He reallotted the lands to able-bodied soldiers after making provision for the maintenance of the people who already possessed such lands. In the case of old men, however, they were allo-

wed to retain the lands in recognition of their past services.

## Suppression of Rebellions

Balban put an end to all the rebellions and disorders in the country with an iron hand. Doab and Oudh were the hotbed of rebellions. The city of Delhi was exposed to the raids of the robbers everyday. The greatest insecurity prevailed to men and property in the distant provinces. He freed the neighbourhood of Delhi from the marauders and miscreants. He cleared the jungles around the capital city and hunted out the robbers. To provide for the safety of the capital city, he created military outposts and garrisoned them with Afghan troops. He next turned his attention to the Doab and Oudh and by concentrated drive against the robbers, he put down brigandage and lawlessness. He put down a rising of the Hindus in the Salt Range. His expeditions against Rajputana and Bundelkhand to quell the rebellions achieved little success. Thus by clearing forests, laying roads and erecting strong outposts, he made the country safe from robbers and law-breakers.

## Suppression of the rebellion in Bengal

Tughril Khan, the Governor of Bengal, led by evil advisers "allowed the egg of ambition to be hatched in his head". He raised the flag of insurrection in 1280, assumed the title of Sultan, struck coins and caused the *Khutba* to be read in his name. Balban sent Amin Khan, the Governor of Oudh, to put down the rebellion. But he was beaten back. The enraged Sultan issued orders to hang the Governor over the City Gate of Oudh. The next two expeditions against the rebel disastrously failed. So Balban himself fitted out an expedition to hunt out the rebel. On hearing the news of the approach of Balban, Tughril fled towards the eastern districts But he was caught and beheaded. Balban erected gibbets on both sides of the bazaar at Lakhnauti and the followers and relatives of Tughril were hanged. The persecuting and revengeful spirit of Balban could be gleaned from the following words uttered to his son Bughra Khan. "If ever designing and evil-minded persons should incite you to waver in your allegiance to Delhi and to throw off its authority, then remember the vengeance which you have seen exacted in the bazaar".

## Mongol Invasions

The frequent Mongol invasions plagued the mind of Balban. He took effective steps to guard the north-west frontier to arrest the penetration of the Mongols. He erected a line of forts in the north-west

frontier and garrisoned them with Afghan troops. The provinces of Multan, Sind and Lahore were put under the control of his eldest son, Muhammad Khan and the provinces of Sunam and Samana under the charge of his younger son, Bughra Khan. In spite of the eternal vigilance, the Mongols infiltrated into the country and laid waste the Uppper Punjab and even succeeded in crossing the Sutlej. But the Mongols were beaten back by the two princes in 1279. In another encounter with the Mongols in 1286, prince Muhammad lost his life.

## Last days of Balban

The death of Prince Muhammad was a great shock to Balban. The prince was not only a great soldier and an excellent administrator but also a man of letters. Such a noble son on whom Balban wanted to transfer the mantle of sovereignty predeceased him. The terrible shock shook his health beyond recovery. After nominating Kai Khusrau, the son of Muhammad, as his heir-apparent, Balban reached the land of eternal rest in 1287.

## Estimate

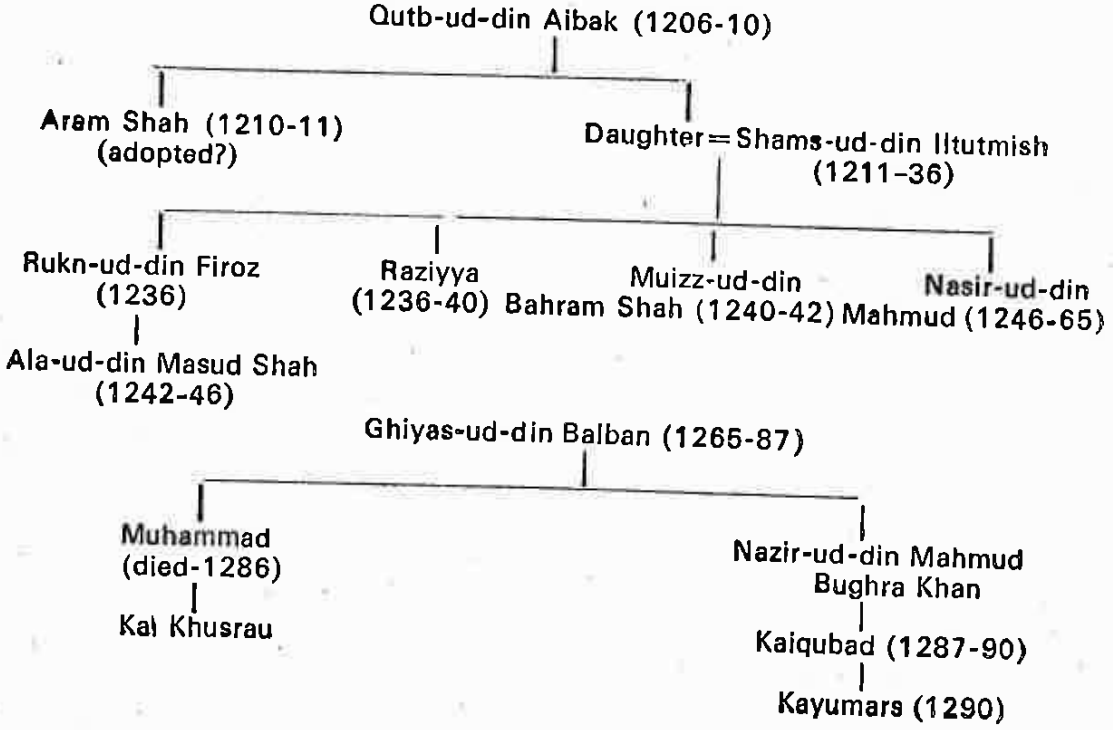
For a period of 40 years, Balban dominated the political scene of North India like a colossus. He exalted monarchy from the relative neglect into which it had fallen to a higher plane. He reduced the nobles to obedience and inculcated in the minds of the people traditions to strengthen the bonds of loyalty and obedience to the throne. With a well-drilled and disciplined army, he suppressed the refractory chiefs and repelled the Mongol invasions. He evolved order out of chaos. He carefully nursed the infant Turkish Sultanate and left it to stand on its own legs after his death. In the midst of his strenuous activities, he found time to patronise men of letters. It is true that he indulged in wanton cruelty. But the times necessitated brutal punishments to law-breakers in order to achieve his ultimate goal. In the words of Lane-Poole: "Balban, the slave, water-carrier, huntsman, general, statesman and Sultan is one of the most striking figures among many notable men in the long line of the kings of Delhi".

## Kaiqubad (1287-1290)

After the death of Balban, the nobles set aside Kai Khusrau, the nominee of the Sultan, and enthroned Kaiqubad the son of Bughra Khan. It was a wrong choice which hastened the decline of the so-called Slave Dynasty. He ascended the throne under the title of Muiz-ud-din Kaiqubad when he was only 17 years old. The young man who

had not so far seen the pleasures of life found his path strewn with opportunities. He soon became a colourless rake. Moreover, he became a puppet in the hands of Nizam-ud-din. Kai Khusrau was murdered at the instigation of the Sultan. Bughra Khan came to Delhi at the head of an army to reprimand his son. He advised him to give up vices and get rid of Nizam-ud-din. Nizam-ud-din was treacherously killed by poisoning. For a time, the counsel of his father yielded good results. After some time, Kaiqubad returned to his old pastures. Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khilji became the new commander of the army. As Kaiqubad was struck down with paralysis, the nobles raised to the throne in 1289 his infant son under the title of Shams-ud-din Kayumars. In the meantime, the nobles conspired together to get rid of Jalal-ud-din Khilji. But even before the conspiracy was in the air, he smelled the rat. He took precautionary measures to safeguard his own power. He took the offence and occupied Delhi. He got Kaiqubad murdered in 1290 and posed as the regent to the infant Sultan. But the new arrangement was only a stop-gap arrangement to finally pave the way for the ascendancy of the Khiljis. Jalal-ud-din Firuz put to death Kayumars in 1290 and occupied the throne of Delhi.

## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SLAVE KINGS



SECTION III

# THE KHILJI DYNASTY

## 1. JALAL-UD-DIN FIRUZ SHAH (1290–1296)

### Introduction

After the fall of the so-called Slave Dynasty, the Turkish rule continued under the Khiljis. Jalal-ud-din Firuz Shah, the founder of the Khilji dynasty, was 70 years old when he became the Sultan. He was thoroughly unfit for that exalted office. He was extremely kind and generous even to his foes. There was so much opposition from the Ilbari Turks to the sudden elevation of the Khilji Turks to imperialism that Jalal-ud-din temporarily shifted his headquarters to Kilokhri, a suburb of Delhi. Though he conferred titles and honours on his relatives, the key posts were still held by the Turks of the Ilbari tribe. The ambitious Khiljis who aspired for high positions flocked under the banner of Ala-ud-din Khilji, the nephew of the Sultan.

### Rebellion of Malik Chhajju

Malik Chhajju, the nephew of Balban and the Governor of Kara-Manikpur, raised the flag of insurrection in the second year of the reign of the Sultan. Hatim Khan, the Governor of Oudh, joined him. The combined forces of the rebel governors were defeated by the imperial forces at Badaun. Malik Chhajju and his followers were brought in chains before the Sultan. Instead of trying them, he pardoned them and even entertained them to a wine party. The fief of Kara was assigned to his nephew and son-in-law, Ala ud-din. When a thousand *thugs*, a band of robbers and murderers, were brought before the Sultan, he only gave them pardon which once again enabled them to carry on their nefarious activities with added vigour. He deviated from the usual policy of leniency only in one case. The followers of Sidi Maula, a Muslim saint, plotted to kill Jalal-ud-din and enthrone the saint as the Sultan. Sidi Maula was trampled under the feet of an elephant.

### Ranthambhor, Mongols, Mandawar and Jhain

The Sultan led an expedition against Ranthambhor in 1290, but returned to Delhi without besieging the fort on the excuse that he did not consider ten such forts worth a single hair of a Muslim. On the way back to Delhi, he captured Jhain. In 1292, the Mongols penetrated as far as Sunam. The Sultan defeated them. Ulugh, a descendant of Chingiz Khan, along with 4,000 followers embraced Islam and came to

be known as "New Muslims". In the same year, he captured Mandawar from the Rajputs and conducted a second raid into Jhain.

## Ala-ud-din's Campaigns

With the permission of the Sultan, Ala-ud-din plundered Bhilsa in 1292 and returned to Delhi with an immense booty. As a mark of pleasure, the Sultan conferred on him the viceroyalty of Oudh also. During the Bhilsa campaign, he heard of the fabulous wealth of Devagiri. Without seeking the permission of the Sultan, he fitted out an expedition to Devagiri in 1296. Devagiri was ruled by Ramachandradeva. Unfortunately for Ramachandradeva the main wing of his army had gone to the south under his son Singhana. Ala-ud-din easily defeated Ramachandradeva and plundered the city. The Yadava ruler purchased peace by surrendering huge treasures. In the meantime, Singhana returned to headquarters and effected a junction with Ala-ud-din. But he was soon outnumbered and once again Ramachandradeva purchased peace at a higher cost. With the Deccan gold, Ala-ud-din triumphantly returned to Kara.

## Murder of Jalal-ud-din (1296)

The long absence of Ala-ud-din at Kara roused the suspicion of the officers at Delhi. The trusted officers of the Sultan warned him that Ala-ud-din was too ambitious to be trusted. But the Sultan did not pay any heed to it. If at all he had any suspicion, it was lulled by the sugar-coated words of Ulugh Khan, the brother of Ala-ud-din. He explained to him that as Ala-ud-din undertook the expedition without the Sultan's permission, he was afraid of the Sultan's admonition. Further, he told him that his nephew and son-in-law was anxious to surrender the Deccan gold and persuaded him to go to Kara-Manikpur. Disregarding the protests of the officers, the Sultan reached Manikpur with an army. The Sultan fondled his nephew, Ala-ud-din, and showered on him his unfailing affection and love. But the treacherous nephew gave a signal and Jalal-ud-din was murdered by two villains. His head was cut off and the ghastly trophy was paraded round Kara, Manikpur and Oudh. When the blood was still dripping from the head of the Sultan, the royal umbrella was raised over the head of Ala-ud-din and the conspirators proclaimed him Sultan of Delhi in 1296.

## 2. ALA-UD-DIN KHILJI (1296–1316)

### Early life

Ala-ud-din was brought up by his uncle Jalal-ud-din Firuz with great affection and care. He gave his daughter in marriage to him. Immediately after he became the Sultan, he promoted his nephew and son-in-law to the rank of *Amir-i-Tuzak*. He was appointed Governor of Kara-Manikpur after the displacement of Malik Chhajju. He raided Malwa and plundered the city of Bhilsa in 1292. The plunder brought him immense booty. He shared with his uncle the joys and the spoils. As a mark of pleasure, the Sultan conferred on him the viceroyalty of Oudh also. Without seeking the permission of the Sultan, he conducted an expedition to Devagiri in 1296, defeated the ruler and amassed immense riches. Disregarding the protests of the officers, Jalal-ud-din went to Kara-Manikpur to meet his nephew. But the ambitious nephew treacherously murdered him in 1296. The Sultan's head was cut off and paraded round Kara, Manikpur and Oudh. While the blood was still dripping from the head of the Sultan, the royal umbrella was raised over the head of Ala-ud-din and the conspirators proclaimed him Sultan of Delhi in 1296.

### Difficulties of Ala-ud-din

As soon as he came to the throne, Ala-ud-din was surrounded by difficulties on all sides. He had to face troubles from within and without. The followers of the late Sultan called the Jalali nobles fomented troubles. They were still brooding over the death of their grand old master and were waiting for an opportunity to avenge his death. The widowed queen Malikha Jahan advanced the claims of her sons, Arkali Khan and Qadr Khan to the throne. As Arkali Khan was not in headquarters, Malikha Jahan took the rather hasty and foolish step of elevating to the throne her second son, Qadr Khan under the title of Rukn-ud-din Ibrahim. Thus she unconsciously sowed the seeds of dissension in the royal camp. The Hindu chiefs also fomented troubles and were waiting for an opportunity to shake off the Turkish yoke. Above all, the Mongol menace proved a greater danger to the very existence of the Sultanate.

### Consolidation of Power

The task which Ala-ud-din had to accomplish was hard indeed. The elevation of the second son of the late Sultan to the throne created a rift in the royal camp. Encouraged by this rift, Ala-ud-din marched to Delhi "with iron in one hand and gold in the other". By the lavish

distribution of the Deccan gold, he purchased the loyalty of all sections of the people. When Ala-ud-din reached Delhi, Rukn-ud-din staged a resistance. As his supporters deserted him, he along with his mother fled to Multan. The victorious army made a triumphal march into Delhi and finally enthroned Ala ud din as the Sultan of Delhi towards the end of 1296. He despatched a large army under Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan to Multan against Arkali Khan and Ibrahim. They were blinded. Later on, they were put to death and the Queen-mother was put under restraint at Delhi. He severely punished the nobles who deserted their old master and went over his side for the mere love of gold. After his accession, he had to face a strong Mongol menace. A horde of 1,00,000 Mongols came as far as Lahore. They were beaten back.

### The Grand Dreams of Ala-ud-din

During the first three years of his reign, the Goddess of Victory repeated smile after smile on Ala-ud-din. Laurels were won by his generals, immense booty flowed into the state coffers and God blessed him with sons. The uniform success of Ala-ud-din during the early part of his reign turned his head. As Barani writes: "In his exultation, ignorance and folly, he quite lost his head, forming the most impossible schemes and nourishing the most extravagant desires. He was bad-tempered, obstinate and hard-hearted but the world smiled upon him, fortune befriended him and his schemes were generally successful, so he only became the more reckless and arrogant". He cherished the most absurd design of founding a new religion and aspired to follow the footsteps of Alexander the Great as the Conqueror of the world. But the timely counsel given by the *Kotwal* of Delhi brought him to his senses. According to his advice, he gave up the idea of founding a new religion and committed himself to the task of conquering the whole of India instead of the whole world. His conquests fall under two divisions: (1) the conquest of the North, and (2) the conquest of the South.

## CONQUEST OF THE NORTH

### 1. Gujarat (1297)

Most of the conquests of Ala-ud-din were unprovoked. Gujarat was no exception to this. A strong army was sent under Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan to conquer the rich Hindu kingdom of Gujarat. Gujarat was ruled by Karan. The imperial forces besieged and captured Anhilvad, the capital city. After offering a mild resistance, Karan fled from the country. Kamaladevi, the wife of Karan, fell into the hands of the besieging forces and she was taken to the harem of Ala-ud-din.

Karan along with his daughter Devaladevi found asylum in the court of Ramachandra of Devagiri. The whole of Gujarat fell an easy prey to the invaders. Flushed by this success, Nusrat Khan sacked the rich port of Cambay. It was here that he found the young handsome Hindu slave eunuch, Kafur. After establishing Muslim hegemony in Gujarat, the victorious army started its return march to Delhi. The "New Muslims" (converted Mongols) quarrelled on the distribution of the spoils. But the rebellion was ruthlessly crushed.

### 2. Ranthambhor (1299–1301)

After the complete subjugation of Gujarat, Ala-ud-din riveted his attention on the impregnable fortress of Ranthambhor. Ranthambhor was ruled by the Chauhan prince Hamir Deva. As Ranthambhor occupied a very vulnerable position and as Hamirdeva gave offence to Ala-ud-din by giving asylum to the rebel "New Muslims", Ala-ud-din directed an expedition against the fortress under Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan. While the siege of the fortress was going on, Nusrat Khan was killed and Ulugh Khan was beaten back. On hearing the reverses of the imperial forces, Ala-ud-din himself came to the scene of action. The siege of the fortress which had been already resumed by Ulugh Khan lasted for one year. When might failed, the Sultan resorted to treachery. With the help of Hamir Deva's treacherous Prime Minister, the fortress fell in 1301. Hamir Deva and all the Rajputs died fighting. The treacherous minister was killed. After entrusting the administration of Ranthambhor to Ulugh Khan, Ala-ud-din returned to Delhi.

### 3. Chitor (1303)

Mewar was the next target of attack of Ala-ud-din. Mewar was ruled by Rana Ratan Singh. Ala-ud-din laid siege to the impregnable fortress of Chitor in Mewar. After a siege of five months, the fortress fell. The Rajput ladies performed the traditional *jauhar*. The fate of Ratan Singh after the battle is not definitely known. Thirty thousand Rajputs were put to the sword in one day. The city was renamed Khizrabad. It has been stated that the main motive of subduing Mewar was to secure Padmini, the wife of Ratan Singh. She was a woman of matchless and surpassing beauty. The episode of Padmini is considered as a mere myth by modern writers. Ala-ud-din returned to Delhi after entrusting the government of Chitor to his son Khizr Khan. The patriotic fervour of the Rajputs forced Khizr Khan to abandon the post in 1311–12. Ala-ud-din then entrusted the adminis-

tration of Chitor to Maladeva, a Rajput chief, who remained feudatory to the Sultan. But Chitor and the whole of Mewar were captured by Rana Hamir in about 1325 from the son of Maladeva.

### 4. Malwa (1305)

Ala-ud-din despatched an army under Ain-ul-mulk, the Governor of Multan, to besiege Malwa. Raja Mahlak Deva was defeated and Ain-ul-mulk was appointed Governor of Malwa. The important Rajput cities of Mandu, Ujjain, Dhar and Chanderi fell into the hands of Ala-ud-din.

### 5. Marwar and Jalor

In 1308, the imperial army captured the strong fort of Siwana in Marwar. This was followed by the annexation of Jalor.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH

After becoming the master of the North, Ala-ud-din Khilji turned his attention to the South. He was the first Muslim ruler to effect the conquest of the South. It is worth mentioning that Malik Kafur was the hero of the Deccan campaigns. The four important kingdoms in the south were: (1) The Yadava kingdom of Devagiri (2) The Kakatiya kingdom of Warrangal (3) The Hoysala kingdom of Dvarasamudra and (4) The Pandya kingdom of Madura.

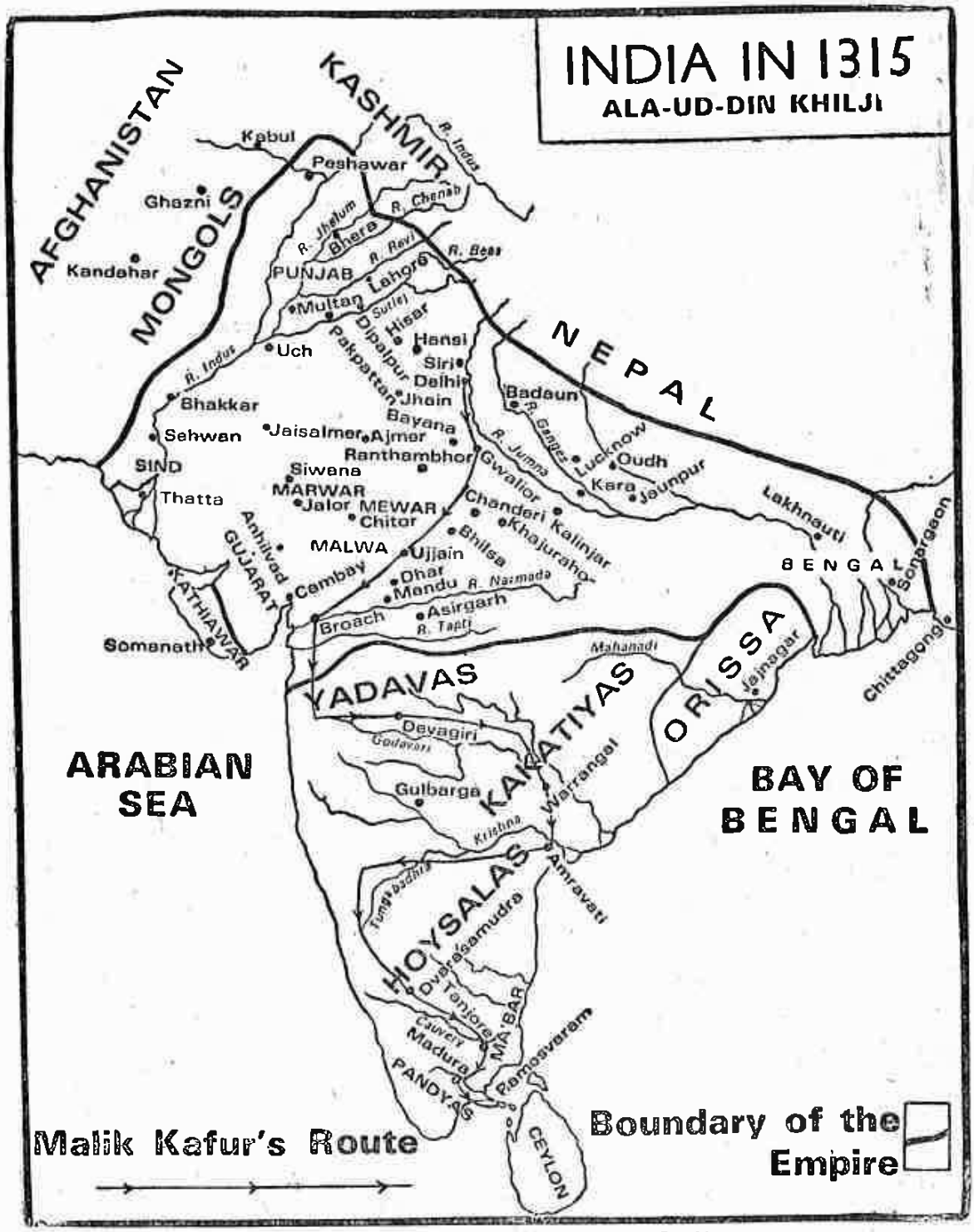
### 1. Conquest of Devagiri (1307)

While acting as Governor, Ala-ud-din had undertaken an expedition to Devagiri. Ramachandra, the ruler of Devagiri, came to terms and promised to pay tribute. But he fell into arrears for three years. The expedition to Devagiri was undertaken to subjugate Ramachandra and to bring to Delhi Devaladevi, the daughter of Karan, the ex-King of Gujarat. Malik Kafur was deputed for the expedition. Ramachandra was defeated. Devaladevi was sent to Delhi and married to Khizr Khan, the eldest son of Ala-ud-din Ramachandra was sent to Delhi to pay his homage to the Sultan. The Sultan conferred on him the title of *Rai-i-Rayan* (Chief of Chiefs). He accepted the overlordship of the Sultan.

### 2. Conquest of Warrangal (1309-1310)

In 1303, Ala-ud-din sent an expedition against the Kakatiyas of Warrangal But the expedition miserably failed. Prataparudra II, the ruler of Warrangal, inflicted a crushing defeat on the imperial forces. To wipe out this disgrace, Ala-ud-din sent another expedition to Warrangal in 1309 under Malik Kafur. After offering a stiff resistance,

Prataparudra II yielded in 1310. An immense booty fell into the hands of Kafur. Prataparudra II promised to pay tribute.




### 3. Conquest of Dvarasamudra (1310-1311)

In 1310, Ala-ud-din sent an expedition against the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra under Malik Kafur and Khwaja Haji. The Yadava ruler rendered them all possible help in their expedition. Ballala III, the

Hoysala ruler, was taken by surprise and defeated. An immense booty fell into the hands of Kafur. Ballala III recognised the overlordship of Ala-ud-din.

### 4. Conquest of Madura (1311)

The Pandya kingdom which lay in the extreme south of the Deccan became the next target of attack of Kafur. A disputed succession to the Pandya throne was going on between Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya. Sundara Pandya who got defeated in the war of succession, went to Delhi and represented his case to the Sultan. It was on this plea that Kafur entered the Pandya kingdom and plundered many temples. When Kafur appeared at Madura, Vira Pandya fled from the city. With the object of capturing the fugitive prince, Kafur came as far as Ramesvaram where he built a mosque.

### 6. The Last Deccan Expedition

Sankara, the son of Ramachandra, fell into arrears. He was defeated and killed by Kafur in 1313. Kafur invaded the Hoysala dominions for a second time. The four southern kingdoms lay prostrate before the Sultan. They recognised the overlordship of the Sultan. But they were not annexed to the Delhi Sultanate.

### The Mongol Invasions

The Mongol raids every now and then proved a great danger to the safety of the State. Punjab, Multan, Sind, the capital city of Delhi and the Doab were seriously threatened by Mongol invasions. Ala-ud-din had to strain every nerve to ward off the Mongol menace right from the beginning of his reign down to 1308. He successfully repelled more than a dozen attacks from them. The frequent Mongol raids opened the eyes of Ala-ud-din to the urgent necessity of frontier defence. He repaired the existing forts and outposts, constructed new ones and strongly garrisoned them.

## DOMESTIC POLICY

### Suppression of Rebellions

The reign of Ala-ud-din was marred by some rebellions. The first rebellion was posed by the "New Muslims" in 1297 on the question of the distribution of the spoils of the Gujarat campaign. It cost the lives of Nusrat Khan's brother and a nephew of Ala-ud-din. The second rebellion was staged by Akat Khan, the son of the Sultan's brother. He even made an attempt on the life of the Sultan. The third rebellion was raised by his two nephews at Badaun and Oudh.

The fourth rebellion posed by Haji Maula, disaffected officer, cost the life of the *Kotwal* of Delhi. Ala-ud-din ruthlessly crushed all the rebellions and the most brutal punishments were given to the ring-leaders. The four rebellions which burst out in a short span of a few years convinced the Sultan that there was something fundamentally wrong in his administration. In consultation with his counsellors, he thoroughly analysed the prevailing order of things and arrived at the conclusion that the rebellions were due to four causes. They were: (1) The inefficiency of the spy system, (2) The use of wine which promoted comradery among the nobles and paved the way for many plots and intrigues, (3) Social contact and matrimonial alliances among the nobles which made them strong and powerful at the expense of the Sultan, and (4) Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few which afforded them time for nurturing idle thoughts and to hatch mischievous plots against the ruler.

## The four Ordinances

After analysing the causes of the rebellions, he promulgated four ordinances to prevent the recurrence of rebellions. The first ordinance aimed at the confiscation of property. All pensions, religious endowments and free grants of land were done away with at one stroke. His measures were so sweeping that according to Barani gold was not to be seen except in the houses of nobles or high officials or the leading merchants. By the second ordinance, he thoroughly reorganised the spy system. The country was filled with an army of spies. They were expected to report to the King about the day-to-day happenings and doings of his officials and subjects in nook and corner of the country. By the third ordinance, the Sultan strictly prohibited the use and sale of wine. Ala-ud-din himself gave up drinking. But the nobles found it very difficult to give up drinking. So after some time, the Sultan relaxed the ordinance and permitted the nobles to drink in their houses. But the sale of wine and cocktail parties were strictly forbidden. By the fourth ordinance, the nobles were not allowed to organise social parties and settle marriages without the prior permission of the Sultan.

## Treatment of the Hindus

The treatment meted out to the Hindus by Ala-ud-din was very harsh. Wealthy Hindu revenue-collectors like a *Chaudhuri* (the head of a pargana), a *Muqaddam* (the head of a village) and a *Khut* (the prototype of the Zamindar of the later times) did not escape from the repressive measures of the Sultan. The land revenue was raised to one-

half of the gross produce. Besides retaining old taxes like the *jizya* and customs and excice taxes, he imposed new taxes like the grazing tax and the house tax. The collection of revenue was made terribly strict. "Men looked upon the revenue officers as something worse than fever". The revenue officer was so much despised that no Hindu would give his daughter in marriage to him. The Hindus were reduced to such abject misery that the Hindu wives were forced to seek service in Mushim houses. As Barani says, the people were all so absorbed in obtaining the means of living that the very name rebellion was never mentioned. "At my command" Ala-ud-din boasted, "they are ready to creep into holes like mice". In short, the choice that Ala-ud-din offered to Hindus was to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water, the helots of the empire.

## Organisation of the Army

Ala-ud-din realized the importance of a standing army. The former Sultans depended upon the irregular forces supplied by the nobles. He introduced some notable reforms in the army administration. He created a permanent standing army. The soldiers were directly recruited by the army minister. The soldiers were paid in cash from the State treasury and they were supplied with all equipments like horses, arms, *etc.* He did not allow the nobles to keep their private armies. He instituted the practice of maintaining a descriptive roll of individual soldiers to stamp out corruption and to prevent fraudulent practices of the soldiers. He introduced the system of branding horses to prevent false musters. According to Ferishta, Ala-ud-din's army consisted of 4,75,000 horsemen. The strength of the infantry is not definitely known. But it is quite probable that it must have far exceeded the strength of the cavalry. To keep the tone and morale of the army on efficient lines, the Sultan himself lavished much personal attention on it.

## Control of the Market

The maintenance of a large army made it absolutely essential to cheapen the necessaries of life. He fixed the prices of all essential commodities. Black-marketeers, speculators and hoarders were severely punished. Grain was stored in state granaries. Strict instructions were given to revenue officers to collect the revenue with the utmost rigour and the cultivators were expected to sell their produce in their respective regions where they were grown. Barani remarks on the working of the system that even in times of drought no scarcity of grain was felt.

The *Diwan-i-Riyasat* and *Shahana-i-Mandi* were the two officers appointed by Ala-ud-din to control the market. Severe punishments were given for violation of *tariff* laws. If a shop-keeper indulged in underweighing, an equal quantity of flesh was cut off from his body to make up the deficiency. As a result of all these measures, prices of essential commodities became cheaper and means of living easier. Different views are held as to whether these measures were enforced throughout the length and breadth of the country or they were confined to Delhi and its surrounding areas. The latter view seems to be more tenable.

## Revenue Policy

Ala-ud-din reorganised the revenue department on efficient lines. The land revenue was raised to one-half of the gross produce for the Hindus and one fourth for the Muslims. Over and above the existing taxes like the *jizya*, customs and excise taxes, he imposed new ones like grazing-tax and house tax on the Hindus. The collection of revenue was made terribly strict. All pensions, religious endowments and free grants of land were done away with. He withdrew all the concessions enjoyed by Hindu revenue farmers and headmen. He introduced a new system for measuring the lands on the basis of standard yields. All these reforms greatly enriched the state exchequer.

## Ala-ud-din's Theory of Kingship

Ala-ud-din believed in the 'Divine Right theory of Kingship'. From time immemorial, the *Ulema* exercised great influence in the affairs of the State. But Ala-ud-din deviated from this tradition and never allowed ecclesiastical interference in matters of State. He subscribed to the theory that the law was to depend upon the will of the King. Ala-ud-din enunciated his theory in the following words: "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful; whatever I think to be for the good of the state, or suitable for the emergency that I decree and as for what, may happen to me on the approaching Day of Judgment that I know not". He was the first Sultan of Delhi to bring the Church under the control of the State and thus gave a secular colour to the State.

## Centralisation of Administration

Ala-ud-din was a typical despot of the 14th century. Like a true despot, he concentrated in his person all the powers. He was his own Prime Minister. Though he had a group of ministers to assist him in the day-to-day administration of the country, it was purely a consulta-

tive body. The ministers were his glorified clerks appointed and dismissed by him at his will. The Provincial Governors danced to the tune of the Central government His spy system worked with great vigour and efficiency. The dread of the spies made the nobles exchange their views by mere signs. The Government of Ala-ud-din Khilji, in short, was a naked despotism.

## Last days of Ala-ud-din

The last days of Ala-ud-din were clouded with sorrow and anxiety. His tireless and unceasing work shattered his health and spirits. To add to his agony, he was neglected by his own wife and children. He became a nerveless tool in the hands of Malik Kafur. Under his evil influence, the Sultan's eldest son, Khizr Khan was confined in the fortress of Gwalior, his mother was confined in Old Delhi, and Alp Khan, the Governor of Gujarat, was murdered. At the instigation of Malik Kafur, Ala-ud-din nominated his minor son, Shihab-ud-din Umar as heir-apparent to the throne. Rebellions broke out in different parts of the country. Harapala, the successor of Sankara in Devagiri, was the first to raise the standard of rebellion. Rana Hamir of Chitor drove out the Muslims from Rajasthan. Gujarat also rose in rebellion. Elphinstone says: "The paroxysms of rage produced by a succession of these tidings increased the King's sufferings and soon brought him to the brink of his grave. His end is said to have been accelerated by poison, administered by Kafur". In the words of a Muslim Chronicler: "Fortune proved as usual fickle; and destiny drew her poniard to destroy him". Ala-ud-din died on January 5, 1316.

## Estimate

It is true that Ala-ud-din Khilji was a bloodthirsty tyrant and his government was a naked despotism. "He shed more innocent blood than ever Pharaoh was guilty of". He threw away the dictates of religion and canons of law. He meted out the most brutal punishments for trivial offences. In the words of Vincent Smith: "facts do not warrant the assertion that he exhibited a just exercise of the powers and that his reign was glorious". He was selfish and ambitious. His institutions lacked the elements of permanence. His treatment of the Hindus calls forth for severe condemnation.

But an impartial observer should pass a just verdict on Ala-ud-din. He had in his person the rare combination of a general and administrator. He was the first Turkish Sultan of Delhi to raise a standing army, to reform the revenue rules and regulations, and to cross the Vindhyas.

"His control of the market was one of the marvels of medieval statesmanship". In the teeth of opposition, he brought the Muslim Church under the control of the State. Himself almost illiterate, Ala-ud-din patronised men of letters and encouraged fine arts. His court was adorned by literary luminaries like Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan. Ala-ud-din took keen interest in architecture. The two principal architectural specimens are the *Jamaat Khana Masjid* and *Alai Darwaza.* He constructed the fort of Siri and the "Palace of a thousand Pillars". "Ala-ud-din was the first Muslim imperialist and the first great Muslim administrator of India. The history of Muslim Empire and Muslim administration in India really begins with him. Ala-ud-din, Sher Shah, and Akbar—each marks a distinctive step in the evolution of the Indo-Muslim history".

## 3. THE SUCCESSORS OF ALA-UD-DIN

### Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah (1316-20)

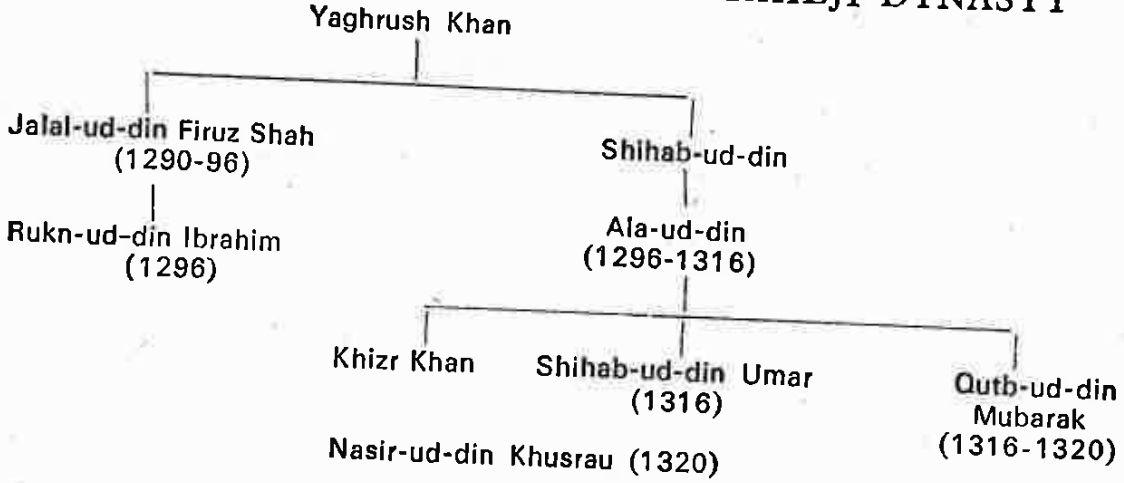
Under the evil influence of Malik Kafur, Ala-ud-din, before his death, disinherited his eldest son, Khizr Khan, and nominated his minor son, Shihab-ud-din Umar as heir-apparent. After his death, Malik Kafur elevated the minor son to the throne and became his regent. At the instigation of Kafur, Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, the sons of the late Sultan, were blinded. Mubarak Khan, the third son of Ala-ud-din and the Queen-mother were thrown into prison. Malik Kafur's attempt to blind Mubarak failed. His own men murdered Kafur at the instigation of Mubarak. After the death of Kafur, Mubarak acted as regent to Shihab-ud-din. He usurped the throne in 1316, after blinding the minor King. He started his reign by giving a number of concessions with a view to winning over the goodwill of the people. The liberalisation of the government led to two rebellions—one in Gujarat and the other in Devagiri. The rebellion in Gujarat was quelled and Harapala, the ruler of Devagiri, was flayed alive. The kingdom of Devagiri was incorporated with the Sultanate. Mubarak indulged in the basest of vices. He became a nerveless tool in the hands of his favourite, Khusrau. Mubarak was murdered by him and Khusrau became the Sultan.

### Nasir-ud-din Khusrau Shah (1320)

Khusrau ascended the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din Khusrau Shah. He married Devaladevi, the widow of Khizr Khan. The new Sultan was originally a Hindu and later on became a convert to the Islamic faith. He wounded the feelings of the orthodox Muslims

by desecrating the *Koran*. The orthodox section of the Muslims found in Ghazi Malik, the Governor of Dipalpur, the leader and defender of the faith. Ghazi Malik marched to Delhi and murdered Khusrau in 1320. Thus the Khilji dynasty came to an end and Ghazi Malik ascended the throne under the title of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KHILJI DYNASTY




## SECTION IV

## THE TUGHLUQ DYNASTY

### 1. GHIYAS-UD-DIN TUGHLUQ (1320–25)

The founder of the Tughluq dynasty was Ghazi Malik, the deliverer of the day during the troubled days of Khilji imperialism. He was born to parents of humble means. By dint of his ability, he rose from position to position and finally became the Sultan of Delhi. During his short reign of less than five years, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq proved himself to be an able administrator. The state coffers had become practically empty due to the lavish extravagance of Mubarak and Khusrau, the last two rulers of the Khilji dynasty. Ghiyas-ud-din set himself to the task of replenishing the impoverished treasury. He confiscated all the lands taken by fraudulent methods. He made provision to save the peasants from undue exactions of the revenue officials. He lightened the burden of taxation by fixing the state's demand to one-tenth or one-eleventh of the gross produce and also by remitting taxes during times of drought. He undertook many irrigation schemes to cater to the needs of the agriculturists. He stamped out corruption from the country by appointing upright Governors and by recruiting people with better salaries to public offices on the basis of merit.

Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq re-established the authority of the Sultanate in the Deccan. Prataparudradeva II, the Kakatiya ruler of

Warrangal, refused to acknowledge the overlordship of the new dynasty by refusing to pay the tribute. In the second year of his reign (1321–22), Ghiyas-ud-din sent an expedition against him under the crown-prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan). But the expedition ended in disaster. So a second expedition was sent in 1323 against Warrangal again under the command of Juna Khan. Warrangal fell. Prataparudra became a captive and was sent to Delhi. According to Barani, Warrangal was renamed Sultanpur. But as Prataparudra is referred to as the ruling King in an inscription dated 1326, it seems quite probable that his country was not annexed to the Sultanate and he must have been restored to power by the benevolent Sultan on condition of paying tribute or Prataparudra must have asserted his power. After the subjugation of Warrangal, Juna Khan led an expedition to Jajnagar (Orissa) and captured 40 elephants. After his brilliant campaigns, Juna Khan returned to headquarters. He was given a hero's welcome by the jubilant Sultan. But the rejoicings were marred by the unexpected attack of Samana by the Mongols after crossing the Indus. But they were beaten back.

Bengal became practically independent after the death of Balban. It was ruled by Bughra Khan (second son of Balban) and his son Rukn-ud-din Kaikaus till 1301. Then the sceptre of Bengal changed hands. It was wielded by Shams-ud-din Firuz, a former slave till 1322. Even during his reign, his two sons, Shihab-ud-din Bughdah and Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur superseded the authority of their father at Lakhnauti and Sonargaon respectively. After the death of Shams-ud-din in 1322, the quarrels among his sons assumed greater dimensions and now Nasir-ud-din Ibrahim—another son of Shams-ud-din—also entered the field. Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur occupied Lakhnauti also. The disturbed condition in Bengal attracted the attention of the Sultan. He marched towards Bengal in 1324. Nasir-ud-din, who in the meantime occupied Lakhnauti, joined the Sultan at Tirhut. The Sultan despatched an army under Nasir-ud-din and his adopted son Baharam Khan against Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur. He was defeated and sent as a prisoner to Delhi. Northern Bengal with capital at Lakhnauti was placed under the control of Nasir-ud-din on condition that he would remain a vassal of the Delhi Sultan. Eastern Bengal and Southern Bengal with capitals respectively at Sonargaon and Satgaon were incorporated with the Sultanate and Baharam Khan was deputed to govern

them.

The victorious Sultan was received by Prince Juna Khan in Afghanpur near Delhi in a specially constructed pavilion for the purpose. The pavilion gave way and the Sultan was crushed to death in 1325. The circumstances under which the Sultan died were of a highly suspicious nature although there is no concrete evidence to prove the fact that the crown-prince had a hand in this audacious act.

## 2. MUHAMMAD-BIN-TUGHLUQ (1325–51)

### Early life

Fakhr-ud-din Muhammad Juna Khan designated variously as Muhammad Tughluq, Muhammad-bin-Tughluq or Muhammad Shah was born to Ghazi Malik, a frontier Governor. Even from his very early days, Juna Khan was of a scholarly bent of mind. He was appointed Master of the Horse under the Khilji ruler Khusrau Shah. The latent qualities of Juna Khan found fuller and freer expression only after his father became the Sultan of Delhi in 1320. The father nominated him as heir-apparent to the throne and conferred on him the title, Ulugh Khan. In the second year of his reign (1321–1322), Ghiyas-ud-din sent an expedition against Prataparudradeva II of Warrangal under Juna Khan. The first expedition ended in disaster. The second expedition sent against him in 1323, again under the command of Juna Khan proved a success. Prataparudradeva was sent as a captive to Delhi. After the subjugation of Warrangal, Juna Khan led an expedition to Orissa (Jajnagar) and captured 40 elephants. After his brilliant campaigns, Juna Khan returned to headquarters. He was given a hero's welcome by the jubilant Sultan. But the rejoicings were marred by the unexpected attack of Samana by the Mongols after crossing the Indus. But they were beaten back. After the expedition to Bengal, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq was received by the crown-prince Juna Khan in Afghanpur near Delhi in a specially constructed pavilion for the purpose. The pavilion gave way and the Sultan was crushed to death in 1325. The circumstances under which the Sultan died were of a highly suspicious nature although there is no concrete evidence to prove the fact that the crown-prince had a hand in this audacious act. He ascended the throne in 1325 under the title, Muhammad Tughluq.

## DOMESTIC POLICY

### Taxation of the Doab (1325-27)

The munificence of the Sultan impoverished the treasury. To replenish the treasury, he enhanced the taxes in the Doab, the fertile tract of land between the Ganges and the Jamna. In the words of Barani, "it operated to the ruin of the country and decay of the people". The taxes were exacted with utmost rigour. The peasantry, reduced to straits, groaned under the weight of oppressive taxation. Cultivation was greatly affected. Those who were rich became rebels. Barani exaggerated the misery of the people and even went to the extent of saying that the ryots in distant lands hearing the distress of the people in the Doab rose into open rebellion. The time chosen to enhance the taxes was most inopportune because a heavy famine ghastly and horrible beyond words was raging in all its fury in the Doab. When ameliorative measures like digging of canals and advancing of loans were undertaken, it was too late.

### Transfer of Capital (1326-27)

Muhammad transferred his capital from Delhi to Devagiri renamed Daulatabad. The motive behind the move might have been to ward off the frequent Mongol invasions or to secure the proximity of the newly acquired southern kingdoms or his desire to have the capital to be centrally situated. It was not a novel experiment in those days. It may be held that what Muhammad wanted was only a second capital. But the follow-up measures which he undertook were ill-considered and irrational. He ordered the whole population of Delhi to migrate to Devagiri, a distance of 700 miles. Many were the hardships of the people on the way in spite of the arrangements made by the Sultan for the comfort and convenience of the people at intervals. The people not only had to forego their belongings but also their pleasant memories of their long association with Delhi. Many people died on the way. When Muhammad realized his mistake, he asked the people to go back to Delhi. Devagiri was left desolate and the people moved to Delhi. But Delhi regained its former glory only after the lapse of many years. As Lane-Poole observes: "Daulatabad was a monument of misdirected energy". Had the Sultan merely contented himself with the transfer of the machinery of the government alone, it would have been a transcendent success. But he made an egregious blunder in making the entire population move from Delhi.

## Issue of Token Currency (1329–30)

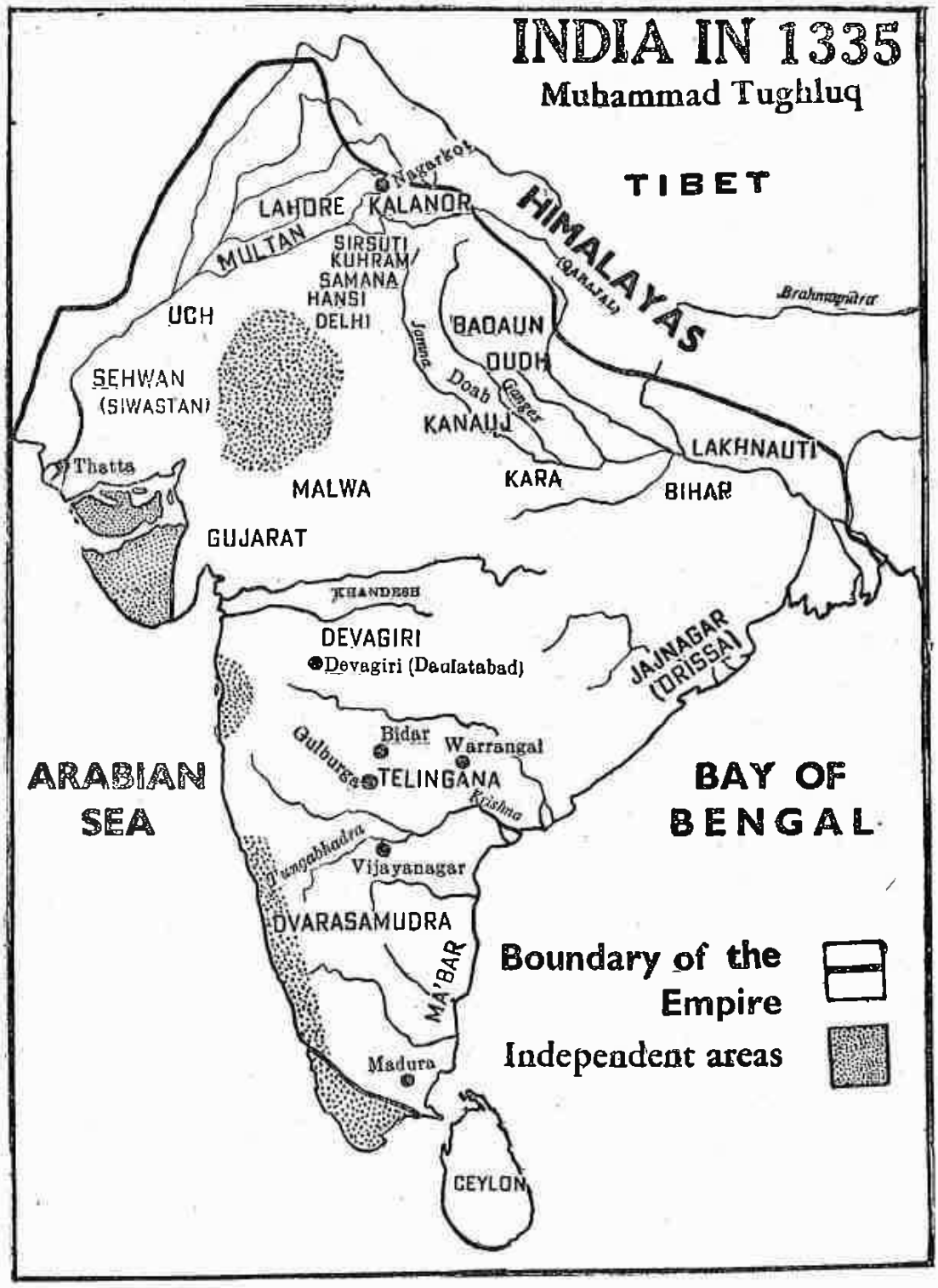
Another bold venture which Muhammad, the "Prince of Moneyars" attempted was the issue of token currency. Faced with an acute shortage of money on account of his munificence and ever-increasing military expenditure, he was forced to try this new experiment. As token currency was prevalent in China and Persia, Muhammad, too, wanted a change in his own currency system. He introduced the copper currency system. Copper coins were minted, made legal tender and were allowed to circulate on par with gold and silver. The experiment proved a colossal failure. He did not take any step to prevent the circulation of counterfeit coins. As Barani says, the home of every Hindu was turned into a mint. Gold and silver disappeared from circulation. Trade came to a state of flux. Commerce was paralysed. The foreign merchants refused to accept the tokens. When confusion became worse confounded, the Sultan withdrew the token currency. He paid for every copper coin brought to the treasury at its face value in gold and silver.

## Muhammad's religious views

Muhammad ignored the canon law and followed the dictates of reason to pronounce his political judgments. He did not allow the *Ulema* to interfere in state affairs. He deprived the Muslim theologians of their sole right of judicial administration Along with the *Qazis* who dispensed justice, he also appointed non-religious persons as judges. He severely punished the *Ulema* whenever they wavered in their allegiance to the Sultan or indulged in fraudulent practices. He followed a liberal policy towards other religions. He gave many key posts to the people of other faiths. The net effect of these measures was that he incurred the displeasure of the orthodox Muslims.

Like Balban, Muhammad also wanted to assert the majesty and sovereignty of the Sultan. He firmly believed that the Sultan was the "Shadow of God". In short, he stood for absolute monarchy and the Caliph was inferentially excluded from all references As the Sultan became more and more unpopular with the people, he construed that it might have been due to the neglect of the Muslim Law. During the later years of his reign, he gave with all humiliation what was due to the Caliphate. He earnestly implored the Caliph of Egypt to confirm him as the Sultan of Delhi. All coins bore the name of the Caliph and all royal orders were executed in his name. But all these measures only increased his worries and anxieties and did not save him from the

impending deluge.




## FOREIGN POLICY

### Plan for conquest of Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq

Muhammad formed the bold design of conquering Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq. With this end in view, he raised an army of

3,70,000 men and paid them for one whole year. When he realised that the plan was an uphill task, he disbanded the army.

### Conquest of Nagarkot (1337)

Muhammad fitted out an expedition against the fort of Nagarkot situated in the Kangra district in the Punjab. The fort fell. But the Hindu ruler of Nagarkot was generously reinstated.

### Qarajal Expedition (1337-38)

Though the exact location of Qarajal is still a debatable question, yet it can be safely said that it was situated at the foot of the Himalayas. It is wrong to assume that the Qarajal expedition was aimed at conquering China or Western Tibet. He sent a large army for the expedition. Though the refractory Hindu chieftain was brought to his senses, the imperial army suffered heavily in men and materials due to the outbreak of monsoon.

### Relations with China

Toghan Timur, the Chinese Emperor, sent an envoy to the Court of Muhammad in 1341 with a special request to rebuild some of the Buddhist temples which were demolished during the Qarajal expedition. Muhammad sent Ibn Batutah as his envoy to China with a note to the Emperor that the laws of Islam forbade the reconstruction of temples unless the *jizya* was paid.

### Mongol Invasion (1328-29)

The transfer of capital to Daulatabad brought in its wake a serious Mongol invasion. The Mongols under their leader Tamashirin crossed the frontier and played havoc in the region extending from Lahore and Multan to the vicinity of Delhi. Muhammad warded off the Mongol menace by rich presents. This was an unwise policy because it greatly undermined the military prestige of the Sultanate.

### Rebellions

The ill-timed and absurd projects of the Sultan made him very unpopular. They wrought untold misery on the people. The pent-up feelings of the people found expression in a number of rebellions. Sayyid Ahsan Shah, the *Kotwal* of Ma'bar, (it was the southern-most province of the empire with capital at Madura) proclaimed his independence in 1334–35. The rebellions in Lahore and Daulatabad were suppressed. Bengal became independent in 1337. The rebellions in Kara, Bidar, Gulbarga, Oudh and Multan were mercilessly put down. The Sultan ruthlessly put down the rebellion in Samana organised by

the Jat and Bhatti Rajput chiefs. The ring-leaders were brought to Delhi and forced to embrace Islam.

The repressive measures of the Sultan led to the foundation of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in 1336. Harihara, the founder of the empire, lent support to a rebellion organised by Krishna Nayak, the Kakatiya ruler in 1343–44. The entire region south of the Krishna and Tungabadhra was lost to the Sultan. Only Gujarat and Devagiri in the South were in the hands of the Sultan. The Sultan recalled Qutlugh Khan, the Governor of Devagiri, for his inability to cope with the collection of revenue. The recall of the popular Governor led to popular discontent in the province. The foreign nobles known as *Amiran-i-Sadah* now fomented troubles. Aziz Khummar, the Governor of Malwa, murdered many foreign nobles. The foreign nobles in Gujarat too rebelled against the Sultan. The Governor of Gujarat was not able to suppress the rebellion. The rebels put to death Aziz. The Sultan, however, put down the revolt in Gujarat. The foreign nobles in Devagiri now started the offensive and occupied Devagiri. The trouble soon spread to Berar, Khandesh and Malwa. The Sultan proceeded to Devagiri and put down the rebellion. As a rebellion again broke out in Gujarat, the Sultan was forced to proceed towards Gujarat. The absence of the Sultan from Devagiri gave an excellent opportunity for the foreign nobles under their leader Hasan Gangu to lay the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom in 1347.

## The death of the Sultan

Taghi, the rebel leader in Gujarat, was driven out and forced to take shelter at Thatta in Sind. The Sultan was stationed in Gujarat for three years so as to reorganise the administration of the province. In 1351, he took up the offensive against Taghi. While the Sultan was on the move to Thatta, he was taken ill and died in 1351. In the words of Badauni, "the King was freed from his people and they from their king".

## Character and Estimate of Muhammad

The character of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq has been a matter of much learned discussion among scholars. One school portrays him as a lunatic and bloodthirsty tyrant. Another one negatives the opinion and exonerates him from the charges of bloodthirstiness and madness. A balanced view should take the pros and cons of the issue and then decide in a dispassionate way whether he was a genius or a lunatic, an idealist or a dreamer, a bloodthirsty tyrant or a benevolent King

Muhammad was undoubtedly a versatile genius. A man highly accomplished in all conceivable arts and sciences of his times, he was a "veritable wonder of creation" with an unfailing memory and an eloquence unrivalled. He was well-versed in Persian and Arabic. In composition and calligraphy he was highly distinguished. "An eloquent and profoundly learned scholar", he was a horror to professional rhetoricians and theologians who feared to rival his brilliance and arguments His generosity would have made even Hatim look a miser. He abstained from drinking. In private life, he adhered to the sacred tenets of the Islamic faith. He had a high sense of justice.

In spite of all his accomplishments, he was not devoid of vices. Cruelty and caprice were the black spots in his character. "Trained elephants, with tusks armed with iron blades, tossed the victims in the air, trampled them under foot and carved them into slices". His nephew suspected of treason was "flayed and roasted alive and his cooked flesh was sent to his family". "Thus the refined Sultan was also capable of such monstrous barbarity" and Barani was right when he said "he considered making presents and shedding blood the same thing". He presented thus "an amazing compound of contradictions" and Elphinstone doubts "whether he was not affected by some degree of insanity".

Ishwari Prasad says, "Superficially viewed, the Sultan seems to be an amazing compound of contradictions. He is not really so. The charges of bloodthirstiness and madness brought against him by later writers are mostly unfounded. No contemporary writer gives the barest indication of the Sultan's madness. The charge of bloodthirstiness was bolstered up by the members of the clerical party whom the Sultan treated with open disregard. It is true he was, like all medieval despots, subject to great paroxysms of rage and inflicted the most brutal punishments upon those who offended against his will, irrespective of the rank or order to which they belonged; but this is quite a different thing from stigmatising him as a tyrant taking delight in the shedding of human blood. A close examination of the alleged murders and atrocities of the Sultan will reveal the unsoundness of the common view that he found pleasure in the destruction of human species and organised 'man-hunts'."

A balanced view would, of course, brand him neither as a monster nor as a lunatic but he was definitely "a mixture of opposites". "His many good qualities of head and heart seem to be quite incompatible with certain traits of vices in his character, such as revolting cruelty,

frivolous caprice and an inordinate belief in his own view of things. He might have had good ideas but he had not the capacity to execute them. This was best exemplified in his ambitious projects like change of capital, issue of token currency and foreign expeditions and the appointment of new classes of officials. All these indicate a want of judgment which is undoubtedly a great defect in the character of a ruler, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his character and policy largely contributed to the decline of the Delhi Empire".

## 3. FIRUZ TUGHLUQ (1351–1388)

### Early life

Firuz Tughluq was born in 1309 to Rajab, the younger brother of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. His mother was a Bhatti Rajput damsel of Abohar. To save the country from the wrath of the Muslims, she agreed to marry Rajab, and her father Ranmal, the chief of Abohar, was compelled to enter into the matrimonial alliance. Muhammad-bin-Tughluq developed a liking for his cousin. He reposed great confidence in him and nominated him as his successor.

### Accession

The greatest insecurity prevailed in the royal camp when Muhammad-bin-Tughluq breathed his last near Thatta. The Mongol mercenaries in the army plundered the imperial camp. As Muhammad had no son, the officers and nobles offered the throne to Firuz. With utmost reluctance, he accepted the offer. He was proclaimed the Sultan of Delhi in the royal camp near Thatta in 1351. In the meantime, Khwaja Jahan, the deputy of the late Sultan, placed on the throne of Delhi, a 'supposititious child' of Muhammad. As Khwaja Jahan was not a formidable foe, his claim for the boy was invalidated and he was pardoned. But later on, he was murdered at the instigation of the nobles and officers of the army. The reign of Firuz Tughluq is important in two respects—as a soldier and as a statesman. As a soldier, he was a transcendant failure.

### FOREIGN POLICY

### Bengal (1353-1354, 1359-60)

By 1352 Shams-ud-din Iliyas Shah brought the whole of Bengal under his sway. He gave offence to Firuz Shah by invading Tirhut in 1353. The Sultan himself marched against him at the head of a large army. On hearing the news of the approach of Firuz, Iliyas took

shelter in the fort of Ekdala. Without capturing the fort, the Sultan returned to Delhi in 1354. The Sultan organised a second expedition against Bengal in 1359 on the plea of helping Jafar Khan, a son-in-law of the previous Sultan of Eastern Bengal. Sikandar Shah, the son and successor of Iliyas Shah, like his father took shelter in the fort of Ekdala Operations were started against the fort but Sikandar Shah put up a stiff resistance and the Sultan was forced to enter into terms with him. Bengal remained unconquered.

### Jajnagar (1360)

During his return march from Bengal, Firuz halted at Jaunpur for sometime and then fitted out an expedition against Jajnagar (modern Orissa). The Raja of Jajnagar fled from the capital city. The Sultan destroyed the famous Jagannath temple of Puri. The Hindu King agreed to send every year 20 elephants to Delhi.

### Nagarkot (1361)

Nagarkot which was captured by Muhammad Tughluq became independent towards the closing years of his reign. So Firuz fitted out an expedition against Nagarkot. After six month's siege, the Raja submitted.

### Sind (1362-63)

Thatta, the capital of the Jams of Sind, was the next target of attack of the Sultan. The Sultan fitted out an expedition against Jam Babaniya, the ruler of Sind. The imperial army suffered in men and materials due to the outbreak of famine and pestilence. The imperial army retreated to Gujarat. But the army along with the Sultan got stranded in the Rann of Cutch. The whereabouts of the Sultan and the army remained a mystery for six months. In the meanwhile, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, the minister, sent fresh reinforcements to the succour of the Sultan. With this additional army, the Sultan attacked Thatta for the second time. Jam submitted and promised to pay tribute.

## DOMESTIC POLICY

### Administration

Firuz was essentially a man of peace. His failure as a general was in striking contrast with his success as an administrator. Though he did not possess any originality, he wanted his influence to be felt in every field. In carrying out his administrative reforms, he was ably assisted by his Prime Minister, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul.

His reign was marked by high degree of economic progress coupled with comparative prevalence of peace and prosperity. He tried to rectify the bad effects of his predecessor's rule. He wrote off all the pending debts due to the State from the people. The common weal was geared in such a way as to promote the material prosperity of the people.

## Revenue Policy

The revenue administration of the country was in utter confusion and chaos when Firuz assumed the reins of government. The people were subjected to much hardships during the rule of his predecessor. To mitigate the sufferings of the people, he wrote off all *taqavi* loans which had been granted during the time of Muhammad. Firuz increased the salaries of the revenue officers. He entrusted with Khwaja Hisam-ud-din the task of preparing a rough estimate of the income of the State. Though the estimate was not based on the measurement of land, it served as a working hypothesis for the collection of land revenue on a permanent basis.

Firuz abolished twenty-three "frivolous, unlawful and unjust cesses". He also put an end to the practice of collecting benevolences from the Governors at the time of their appointment. He lowered the land revenue. Illegal exactions from the peasants were discountenanced. Due to the excavation of irrigation canals, waste lands were reclaimed and brought under the plough. In short, he was a veritable shepherd keeping a close watch on the welfare of the peasants. Based on the *Koranic* injunctions, he collected only four taxes, *viz.*, *Kharaj*, (1/10th of the produce of the land), *Khams* (one-fifth of the booty captured during the war), *Jizya* or the Poll tax on non-Muslims and *Zakat* (a tax collected from the Muslims to be spent for specific religious purposes). Firuz was the first Sultan of Delhi to impose the *jizya* on the Brahmins because hitherto they enjoyed exemption from it. In addition to these four taxes, he also collected an irrigation tax of one-tenth of the produce. He abolished a number of vexatious duties that stood in the way of free trade.

As a result of his revenue measures, more lands were brought under the plough, trade prospered, necessaries of life became cheaper, the people led a richer life and the state did not suffer from financial bankruptcy. But the revenue policy was not without its defects. The collection of revenue was entrusted to the highest bidders which in turn paved the way for undue exactions from the people. Firuz pre-

ferred the grant of *jagirs* to the officers. The lands so assigned to them were sold at a discount to the professional tax collectors who followed the traditional practice of "exacting more and pay less". The imposition of *jizya* was another serious defect in the revenue policy.

### Irrigation

To improve the lot of the agriculturists, the Sultan excavated five major irrigation canals. He also sank 150 wells and constructed 50 dams. His irrigation works changed the plains of the north into a gardenland.

### Public works

Firuz was a prolific builder. He founded the towns of Firuzabad, Fatehabad, Jaunpur and Hissar. He built 4 mosques, 30 palaces, 200 caravan-sarais, 5 reservoirs, 5 hospitals, 100 tombs, 10 baths, 10 monumental pillars and 100 bridges. He laid out 1,200 gardens. He brought two Pillars of Asoka to Delhi—one from Meerut and the other from Topra.

### Judicial Reforms

The penal law of the land made provision for inhuman and barbarous punishments like amputation of hands and feet, ears and noses, pouring molten lead into the throat, driving iron nails into the hands, feet and bosom and the like. Firuz prohibited all kinds of mutilation and tortures. Firuz followed the *Koranic* law for the administration of law and justice. There was a Chief *Qazi* at the capital city. There were many subordinate *Qazis* in the provinces and chief towns. It was through the instrumentality of the *Qazi* and *Mufti* that justice was administered. While the *Mufti* expounded the law, the *Qazi* pronounced the judgment. Firuz set up an employment bureau to provide suitable jobs for the unemployed. He set up another department called *Diwan-i-Khairat* to render financial assistance for the marriage of poor girls Another department set up by him known as *Diwan-i-Istihqaq* rendered financial help to deserving people.

### Learning

Firuz patronised men of letters. He took keen interest in the promotion of learning. He granted pensions and gratuities to men of learning. He liberally endowed *madrasas* and colleges. As the Sultan was an ardent admirer of history, he patronised the works of Zia-ud-din Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif. The Sultan took special interest in the promotion of Islamic learning. His autobiography known as *Fatuhat-i-Firuz Shahi* was written by him. After the Nagarkot expedi-

tion, a number of Sanskrit works fell into his hands. He ordered some of the works to be translated into Persian.

### Army

Firuz had no standing army. The soldiers were usually paid by grants of land. According to a new regulation, the Sultan allowed the son or son-in-law of the slave of an old soldier to take his place in the army. Invalids and irregulars filled the army. The grant of *jagirs* to the soldiers gradually weakened the position of the Sultan. Fraudulent and corrupt practices crept into the army administration. The tone and discipline of the army sank to a very low level.

### The Slave system

The Sultan encouraged the growth of the slave system. There were in all 1,80,000 slaves out of whom 40,000 were employed in the Sultan's palace. A petty bureaucracy with graded officials was created to look after the slaves. The slaves in course of time became unwieldy. Though the Sultan kept a close watch over them, they became a source of constant danger to the empire. They indulged themselves in plots and intrigues and when the opportune time came, they shook up the Delhi Sultanate.

### The revival of the Jagir system

In spite of the inherent defects in the *jagir* system, Firuz unwisely and foolishly voted for the system. He granted *jagirs* to military officials. It greatly undermined the authority of the Sultan.

### Religious policy

The benevolent effects of the administrative reforms of Firuz were neutralised by his intolerant religious policy. He was an orthodox Sunni Muslim. He gave a free hand to the *Ulema* in State affairs. He desecrated Hindu temples and built mosques in the place of temples. He imposed the *jizya* on non-Muslims. The Sultan did not even spare the Shias for holding liberal views and the Sufis for holding heretical views. He held out promises to non-Muslims to embrace the Islamic faith. The Sultan had the greatest regard for the Caliph of Egypt. He received from him twice the investiture and the robes of honour as Sultan. He called himself deputy of the Caliph. The name of the Caliph also found a place in the coins issued by him and the *Khutba* was read in the name of both the Caliph and the Sultan.

### Last days of Firuz

The last days of Firuz were clouded with anxiety and worry. The

death of his eldest son, Fateh Khan in 1374 came as a rude shock to him. The broken-hearted Sultan, now, associated his third son, Muhammad Khan in the administration. But he proved a misfit. Khan-i-Jahan, the son of the great Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, appropriated to himself all the powers. But the traitor met with his death at the hands of Muhammad Khan. The irresponsibility of the prince roused the nobles to revolt against him. In the fight that ensued, Muhammad was defeated and he had to flee for his life to Sirmur. The aged Sultan then nominated his grandson, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq Shah, the son of Fateh Khan, as his heir-apparent. The Sultan died in 1388. With him departed all the glory and greatness of the Delhi Sultanate.

## Estimate

In the words of Lane-Poole: "Firuz possessed in an overflowing degree the milk of human kindness, that supreme gift of sympathy and tenderness which made the whole Indian world his kin". Contemporary Indian writers eulogize Firuz for his just, merciful and benevolent rule. According to Woolsely Haig: "the reign of Firuz closes the most brilliant epoch of Muslim rule in India before the reign of Akbar". His far-reaching reforms contributed to the material prosperity of the people. His benevolent reforms like writing off the *taqavi* loans, abolition of unjust cessess, his buildings, the steps taken by him for the promotion of learning, the employment bureau and the setting up of departments like *Diwan-i-Khairat* and *Diwan-i-Istihqaq* speak volumes of his munificence.

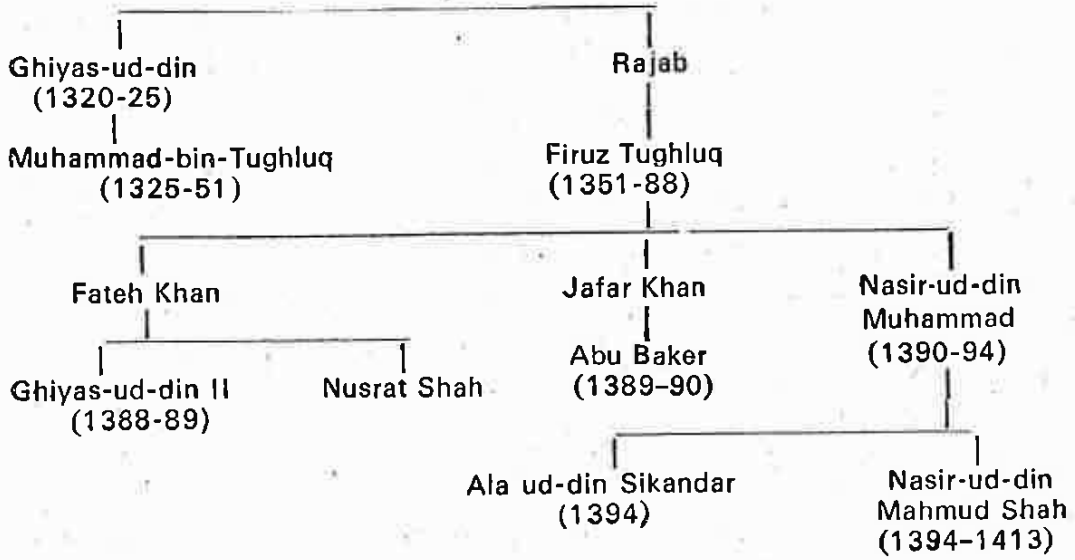
In spite of all these good traits found in him, he was not without blemishes. He was intolerant of other creeds. He imposed the *jizya*. He allowed a free hand to the *Ulema* in State affairs. He revived the much despised *jagir* system and encouraged the slave system. He was no great soldier and made no serious attempts to recover the lost provinces of Deccan, Bengal, Sind and Rajasthan. In the words of R. C. Majumdar: "Although the reign of Firuz was marked by milderness and beneficent activities, in striking contrast to that of his predecessor, it also undermined, to a large extent the foundation of the Sultanate...On the whole, in spite of peace, prosperity, and contentment that prevailed during the long reign of Firuz Shah, no one can possibly doubt that his policy and administrative measures contributed to a large extent to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate, and accelerated the process of decline that had already set in during his predecessor's reign".

## 4. THE LATER TUGHLUQS (1388-1413)

After the death of Firuz Shah, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq Shah II, the son of Fateh Khan, became the Sultan in 1388. He was defeated and killed by his cousin Abu Baker who became the Sultan in 1389. He was forced to abdicate the throne in 1390 by Muhammad (the son of Firuz Tughluq) who thenceforward became Sultan under the title of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah. He died in 1394. He was succeeded by his son, Humayun, who assumed the royal title of Ala-ud-din Sikandar Shah. He died within six weeks after his accession. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah in 1394. He was the last member of the Tughluq dynasty. His claim to the throne was disputed by Nusrat Shah, a son of Fateh Khan. For some time there were two rival Sultans—one at Delhi and the other at Firuzabad.

The successors of Firuz Shah were highly incompetent. Province after province became independent. Timur's invasion of India in 1398 gave a stunning blow to the tottering empire. He bled the country white. After the invasion of Timur, anarchy prevailed in the country and the Sultanate existed only in name. The sway of the Sultan extended to Delhi and a few districts around it. Mahmud Shah was restored to power in 1401. With his death in 1413, the Tughluq dynasty came to an end. The nobles placed on the throne an Afghan noble by name Daulat Khan Lodi. In 1414, he yielded to his more ambitious rival, Khizr Khan who laid the foundation of the Sayyid dynasty.

### GENEOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE TUGHLUQ DYNASTY



## 5. TIMUR'S INVASION OF INDIA (1398)

Timur was born in 1336 at Kesh to the south of Samarqand in Transoxiana. He rose from humble means and became the head of the Chaghatai Turks at the age of 33. By dint of his ability, Timur the Lame or Tamerlane established a vast empire embracing Transoxiana, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Persia, Syria, Qurdistan and a major portion of Asia Minor. Plunder was the main reason for his conquest of India.

Timur's Indian expedition was heralded by an advance guard sent under his grandson, Pir Muhammad. The army crossed the Indus and captured Uch and besieged Multan. Timur crossed the Indus in 1398. He brought under his subjection some local chiefs of the region between the Indus and the Jhelum. He then crossed the Jhelum and the Ravi and besieged Tulamba. An immense booty fell into his hands. The advance guard of Pir Muhammad joined with the main wing of the army. On his way to Delhi, Timur plundered Pak Patan, Dipalpur, Bhatnir and Sirsa. Many Hindu prisoners fell into his hands. Before Timur occupied Delhi in 1398, he ordered all the Hindu prisoners numbering 1,00,000 to be put to death.

Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah and his minister, Mallu put up a mild resistance. When resistance became futile the Sultan and the minister fled for their lives. Timur bled the country white. Thousands of people were put to the sword. In the words of a Muslim chronicler: "High towers were built with the heads of the Hindus and their bodies became the food of ravenous beasts and birds...such of the inhabitants as have escaped alive were made prisoners". An immense booty fell into his hands. His soldiers became upstarts. "There was none so humble but had at least twenty salves".

Sayyid Khizr Khan, the expelled Governor of Multan, joined Timur during his occupation of Delhi. After the sack of Delhi, Timur left India *via* Meerut, Kangra and Jammu carrying with him destruction and devastation. Many Hindus were put to the sword. After appointing Khizr Khan as the Governor of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur, Timur crossed the Indus in 1399, "after inflicting on India more misery than ever before been inflicted by any conqueror in a single invasion".

### Effects of the invasion of Timur

Confusion and chaos prevailed in Northern India after the depar-

ture of Timur. He bled the country white and left Delhi a desolate city. Famine went hand in hand with pestilence and wrought untold misery on the people. The Tughluq empire was shattered to pieces. The Sultanate existed only in name. The wholesale massacre of the Hindus in which Timur indulged estranged the feelings of both the Hindus and Muslims. Timur took along with him a number of artisans who became the chief disseminators of Indian art in Central Asia. Timur's invasion opened wide the doors for the Mughal conquest under Babur.

## SECTION V

## THE SAYYIDS AND LODIS

### 1. THE SAYYID DYNASTY (1414–1451)

#### Khizr Khan (1414-21)

After the death of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the last ruler of the Tughluq dynasty in 1413, the nobles placed on the throne an Afghan noble by name Daulat Khan Lodi. In 1414, he yielded to his more ambitious rival Khizr Khan who laid the foundation of the Sayyid dynasty. He did not assume any royal title. He paid homage and sent annual tributes to Shah Rukh, the successor of Timur. With his accession, Punjab, Dipalpur and parts of Sind came under the control of the Sultanate. Bengal and Deccan were lost to the Sultanate even in the middle of the 14th century. Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat and Kandesh became independent afterwards. Khizr Khan undertook many plundering raids and spent most of his time in suppressing rebellions. He died in 1421.

#### Mubarak Shah (1421-34)

Khizr Khan was succeeded by his son, Mubarak Shah. He assumed the royal title of '*Shah*'. The Khokhars who lived in the valleys of the Jhelum and Chenab raided the adjoining territories. But they were beaten back by Mubarak. The local chiefs of Doab also fomented troubles. But they were brought to their senses. Mubarak was murdered at the instigation of the *wazir,* Sarwar-ul-Mulk.

#### Muhammad Shah (1434-45)

Mubarak was succeeded by his nephew, Muhammad Shah. With the help of the nobles, the Sultan put an end to the life of the ambitious Sarwar-ul-Mulk. When the independent ruler of Malwa marched as far as Delhi with the view of taking the capital city, the Sultan was

helped by Bahlul Lodi, the Governor of Sirhind. As a mark of appreciation for his help, Muhammad Shah conferred on him the title "*Khan-i-Khanan*". Feigning loyalty, Bahlul Lodi occupied the greater part of the Punjab and made an abortive attack on Delhi in 1443. The authority of Muhammad was shaken beyond recovery and even Amirs within an area of 20 miles from Delhi began to proclaim their independence. Multan cut off its connections with Delhi. He died in 1445 after nominating his son, Ala-ud-din as his successor.

### Ala-ud-din Shah (1445-51)

Ala-ud-din Shah proved a thorough misfit. With the assistance of Hamid Khan, the *Wazir* of Ala-ud-din, Bahlul Lodi occupied Delhi in 1451. Ala-ud-din yielded without offering any resistance. He was allowed to retire to Badaun where he died in 1478. The traitor, Hamid Khan was later on arrested. With the resignation of Ala-ud-din, the Sayyid dynasty came to an end in 1451 and Bahlul Lodi ushered in the Lodi dynasty.

## 2. THE LODI DYNASTY (1451–1526)

### Bahlul Lodi (1451-89)

Bahlul Lodi brought about the overthrow of the Sayyid dynasty and laid the foundation of the Lodi dynasty. He got rid of the able but treacherous *Wazir*, Hamid Khan with whose help he had put an end to the rule of the Sayyids. Mahmud Shah, the independent ruler of Jaunpur, attacked Delhi in the absence of the Sultan. But Bahlul returned post-haste to Delhi and Mahmud was beaten back. The defeat of Mahmud enhanced the prestige and power of Bahlul. After a protracted war with Jaunpur, he annexed it in 1479. Husain Shah, the then ruler of Jaunpur, ran away from the country. The Governorship of Jaunpur was conferred on his eldest son Barbak Shah. He organised successful expeditions against Mewat, Sambhal, Sakit, Etawa and Gwalior. He extended the frontier of the Sultanate. He died in 1489 after nominating his son Nizam Khan as heir-apparent to the throne.

### Sikandar Shah (1489-1517)

Nizam Khan, the third son of Bahlul Lodi, ascended the throne under the title of Sikandar Shah. His claim to the throne was disputed by his eldest brother, Barbak Shah. Sikandar Shah led an expedition against Jaunpur. Though he brought his brother under subjection, he reinstated him to power after filling in all important offices

in Jaunpur with his own men. The incompetence of Barbak Shah resulted in the revolt of the Zamindars. Sikandar Shah had him put under confinement and marched against the Zamindars. The Zamindars solicited Husain Shah of Jaunpur who had been dethroned by Bahlul Lodi to sit on the throne of Jaunpur. Husain Shah marched at the head of a large army but was defeated and forced to take asylum in the territory of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah of Bengal. Sikandar then occupied Bihar and patched up a peace with the ruler of Bengal. Both agreed not to conquer each other's territories. He brought the insurgent Afghan nobles to book. The sway of Sikandar extended from Punjab to Bihar. He founded the city of Agra in 1504 and transferred his capital to that city.

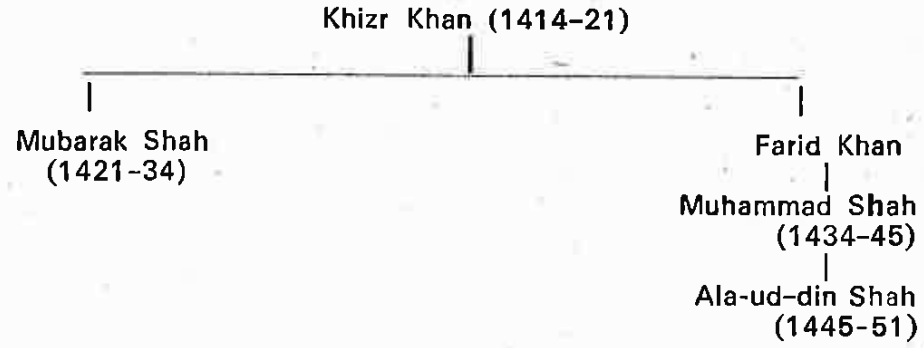
Sikandar centralised the administration. He raised the prestige and power of the Sultan. He caused the accounts of the Afghan nobles audited He organised an efficient spy system. Agriculture and industry received great encouragement. Peace and prosperity prevailed in the country. He patronised art and men of letters. He was a bigot in religious affairs. Serious restrictions were put on the Hindus. He died in 1517.

### Ibrahim Lodi (1517-26)

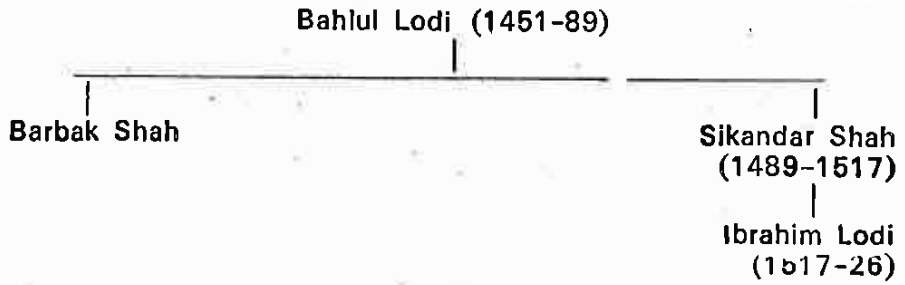
After the death of Sikandar, his son Ibrahim Lodi came to power. He was an uncompromising ruler who harassed and humiliated the nobles in many ways. In the beginning of his reign, he made his brother, Jalal an independent ruler of Jaunpur. After having realised that the step taken by him was unwise, he asked Jalal to return to Delhi. On his refusal to yield, Ibrahim marched against him. Jalal fled to Gwalior. Ibrahim Lodi captured Gwalior. The fugitive Jalal was captured in Gondwana and put to death. On grounds of suspicion, he threw Azam Humayun (the Governor of Kara) and his son into prison. Islam Khan, the son of Azam Humayun, revolted against the tyranny of the Sultan. But he was defeated and killed. When the lot of the nobles became unbearable, a certain section of the discontented party extended an invitation to Babur to invade Hindustan. The most important among them were Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of the Punjab and Alam Khan, the uncle of Ibrahim. Babur seized the opportunity. He defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526. Immediately after the battle, Babur occupied Delhi and Agra. In the words of Ishwari Prasad: "the battle of Panipat placed the empire of Delhi in Babur's hands. The power of

the Lodi dynasty was shattered to pieces and the sovereignty of Hindustan passed to the Chaghatai Turks".

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SAYYID DYNASTY




GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE LODI DYNASTY




## SECTION VI
## GENERAL TREATMENT

### 1. THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE SULTANATE

#### The Sultanate

The Delhi Sultanate was a theocracy. The administration of the State was based on *Koranic* injunctions. Islam was the only religion recognised by the State. All possible steps were taken for the protection and propagation of Islam. The Sultans set themselves to the task of converting the infidel country into the realm of Islam The *Ulema* or Muslim theologians were allowed a free hand in matters of State. But Ala-ud-din Khilji and Muhammad-bin-Tughluq extricated themselves from the control of the *Ulema.* The name of the Caliph was exalted in the Sultanate. Islam recognised the Caliph as the King of all Muslims. All the Delhi Sultans except Ala-ud-din and Mubarak recognised the nominal sovereignty of the Caliph and received investiture from the Caliph. The government was a combination of Indian and foreign elements. It was a "Turko-Persian system in an Indian setting".

## The Sultan

The Sultan was all in all in the administration of the Sultanate. Virtually he was an autocrat with unrestrained powers. His will was law. He was looked upon as the fountainhead of all authority. He combined in his person all powers. The Sultan was required to be guided in his deliberations by the *Ulema* or Muslim Doctors of Divinity. This was the first serious limitation on his power. But some headstrong Sultans like Ala-ud-din did not abide by the decision of the *Ulema*. Such Sultans never allowed religious scruples to interfere with their policy. The nobility constituted another effective check. Further, his authority was tempered and controlled by rebellions and the crying needs of the people. There was no regular law of succession to the throne. Under normal circumstances, the eldest son of the late Sultan succeeded to the throne. But it was not an uncommon feature to see an younger son seated on the throne by the chief officers of State.

## The Ministers

The Sultan was assisted by ministers in the day-to-day administration of the country. They were in no way his colleagues. They were appointed and dismissed by him at his will. In the heyday of the Sultanate, there were in all six ministers. The *Wazir* was the Prime Minister. In spite of the fact that finance was his main concern, he was the head of the civil administration. He had great powers. Under a weak Sultan, he wielded unbridled powers. The *Diwan-i-Risalat* was in charge of foreign affairs. The *Diwan-i-Insha* looked after the royal correspondence. The *Diwan-i-Ariz* was in charge of army administration. The *Sadar-us-Sadar* looked after religious matters and endowments. The *Diwan i-Qaza* was the department of Justice under the control of the Chief *Qazi*. Except the *Sadar-us-Sadar* and the Chief *Qazi*, the other four ministers were full-fledged ministers of the first rate. In addition to these ministers, there were also other departmental heads. *Barid-i-Mamalik* (Head of the Intelligence & Posts), *Diwan-i-Amir Kohi* (Head of the Agricultural department), *Wakil-i-dar* (Controller of the Royal Household) and others were the heads of departments. Apart from all these ministers, the Sultan had a council of advisers known as the *Majlis-i-Khalwat*. But he was not bound by the advice of the council.

## Finance

The main sources of revenue of the State came from *Zakat*, *Jizya*,

*Kharaj, Ushr* and *Khams*. The *Zakat* was a religious tax levied from the Muslims. The amount so collected was spent for the good of the Muslims on such items like repair of mosques and tombs and for religious endowments. The *Jizya* was a poll tax collected from non-Muslims. The *Kharaj* was a land tax imposed on non-Muslims ranging from 1/10 to one-half. The *Ushr* was a land tax amounting to one-tenth of the produce levied from Muslims owning lands watered by natural means. The *Khams* was one-fifth of the plunder appropriated during the war. The remaining four-fifths went to the soldiers. All these taxes had sanction in the *Koran*. Apart from these taxes, there were also other taxes such as presents received by the Sultan, customs duties, excise duties, tax on horses, house tax, grazing tax, water tax and a host of other minor taxes.

## Justice

The Sultan was the fountain of justice in the land. Capital punishment could be given only after getting the consent of the Sultan. The Sultan sat twice a week as a *Mazalini* Court and dispensed justice on the advice tendered by the Chief *Qazi* on secular cases and by the *Sadar-us-Sadar* on religious cases. The offices of the *Qazi* and the *Sadar-us-Sadar* were combined in one and the same person. The Chief *Qazi* was the highest judicial officer. His court constituted the highest court of appeal next only to that of the Sultan. The decision of the Chief *Qazi* was occasionally revised by the Sultan. While the *Mufti* expounded the law, the Chief *Qazi* pronounced the judgment. The *Amir-i-Dad* was in charge of summoning the accused for the witness to the court or for the execution of the decrees. Each province and district had one *Qazi*. *Qazis* were posted in some important towns. Each province had an *Amir-i-Dad*. The *Kotwal* was in charge of the city administration. Each province and important town had its own *Muhtasib*. He was the censor of public morals. The Panchayat court decided cases in the villages. The criminal code was very severe. Firuz Tughluq abolished many brutal punishments like torture and mutilation. There was a well-organised spy system.

## The Army

As the government of the Sultans was not based on the willing co-operation of the people, its stability largely hinged on a large and efficient army. The army consisted of (1) the permanent soldier recruited by the Sultan, (2) the permanent soldiers under the control of the Governors and nobles, (3) soldiers recruited as and when time

necessitated and (4) Muslim volunteers recruited for fighting *Jihad* or Holy War. The army consisted of the cavalry, infantry and the elephant corps. The cavalry was the core of the army. The foot-soldiers called *Payaks* occupied a much inferior position in the army. The *Diwan-i-Ariz* was in charge of the army administration.

### Provincial Government

For the sake of administrative convenience, the empire was divided into a number of provinces each under a Governor. During the rule of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, the number of provinces rose to 23. They were Delhi, Devagiri, Multan, Kuhram, Samana, Sehwan (Siwastan), Uch, Hansi, Sirsuti, Ma'bar, Telingana, Gujarat, Badaun, Oudh, Kanauj, Lakhnauti, Bihar, Kara, Malwa, Lahore, Kalanor, Jajnagar and Dvarasamudra. The administrative set-up of a province was a replica of what was found at the centre. The officers of the provinces were the deputies of the central government and they held in check the power of the Governors. As a result of the growth of administrative powers in the provinces, they were sub-divided into *Shiqs* and each *Shiq* was put under the control of a *Shiqdar*. The next important administrative unit was the *Pargana*. The *Amil*, *Amin* or *Munsif*, two *Karkuns* and a *Qanungo* were the officers of the *Pargana*. The *Amil* was the head of the *Pargana*. The *Amin* was the revenue officer. The *Karkuns* were the registrars. One maintained the accounts in Persian and the other in Hindi. The *Qanungo* kept the previous records of produce and assessment. The village was the lowest unit where the traditional form of government prevailed. A redeeming feature of the rule of the Sultans was that they did not disturb the local institutions of the people.

## 2. ART AND LITERATURE IN THE SULTANATE PERIOD

The art of the Sultanate period represented a combination of Indian and Islamic styles. "Indo-Islamic (Indo-Muslim), or Indian in its Islamic manifestation" was the characteristic feature of the Sultanate art "Strength and grace" were the two vital qualities which Indo-Islamic architecture borrowed from India. The buildings erected during the period may be divided into two groups—those erected under the patronage of the Delhi Sultans and those erected by the Provinces which shook off their allegiance with Delhi. The first represents the "Delhi Style" or "Imperial Style" and the second the "Provincial Style".

## The Delhi Style

The *Quwwat-ul-Islam* mosque erected by Qutb-ud-din in 1193 to commemorate the capture of Delhi is a typical example of the Islamic architecture in its beginning stage. It was enlarged by Iltutmish and Ala-ud-din Khilji. The original structure in design and appearance was essentially Indian. But in the extensions, there was a greater assertion of Muslim ideas. The construction of Qutb Minar originally designed as a tower from which the faithful was called to prayer but subsequently regarded as a tower of victory was begun by Qutb-ud-din and completed by Iltutmish. Marshall says: "the whole conception of the Minar and almost every detail of its construction and ornamentation is essentially Islamic". Again he observes: "Nothing, certainly could be more imposing or more fittingly symbolic of Muslim power than this stern and stupendous fabric; nor could anything be more exquisite than its rich but restrained carvings". The celebrated mosque at Ajmer called the *Adhai-din-ka-Jhompra* erected by Qutb-ud-din also belongs to this category. The mosque was subsequently beautified by Iltutmish with a screen. The Sultan Ghari tomb constructed by Iltutmish is a "Hindu extraction". The mausoleum of Iltutmish is "one of the most ornate monuments of early Indo-Islamic art". The tomb of Balban is "a symbol of reaction against the Hindu influences of the Hindu artisans".

The reign of Ala-ud-din marked a definite reaction against Hindu influences in Muslim architecture. The *Jamaat Khana Masjid* constructed by Ala-ud-din on the tomb of Nizam-ud-din Auliya is "the earliest example in India of a mosque built wholly in accordance with Muhammadan ideas". The *Alai-Darwaza* of Ala-ud-din is "one of the most treasured gems of Islamic architecture". He founded the city of Siri in Delhi and excavated the *Hauz-i-Khas* or *Hauz-i-Alai* tank.

The "puritanical severity" of the buildings of the Tughluqs is in striking contrast with the "rich and ornamental style" of the Khilji buildings. The city of Tughluqabad in Delhi built by Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq gives the appearance of "the stern dignity of a practical stronghold". The mausoleum of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq is noted for its simplicity and strength. Muhammad-bin-Tughluq laid the foundation of the fortress of Adilabad and the city of Jahanpanah in Delhi. Firuz was a prolific builder. He founded the cities of Firuzabad, Fatehabad, Jaunpur and Hissar. Within the city of Firuzabad,

he built the palace-fortress of *Kotla Firuz Shah.* The *Jami Masjid* and a pyramidal structure surmounted by a pillar of Asoka are the two imposing structures within the palace-fortress. He also built a college at *Hauz-i-Khas.* The mausoleum of Firuz Shah is characterised by "a simple dignity and quiet unpretentiousness".

The Sayyid and Lodi Sultans were not rich enough to erect mammoth structures. Tombs for the Sultans and nobles were constructed during this period. In spite of the scanty resources, the first two Sayyid Sultans—Khizr Khan and Mubarak Shah—founded the cities of Khizrabad and Mubarakabad respectively. The notable tombs of the Sultans are those of Mubarak Shah, Muhammad Shah and Sikandar Lodi.

### Provincial Style

The style adopted in the construction of buildings in the provinces was similar to that of the Delhi style. In spite of the predominance of the Delhi style, local art traditions exercised a profound influence on the provincial style. In Bengal, the buildings were erected with bricks. The ruins at Gaur or Lakhnauti and Pandua still remind us "the glory of Muslim architecture of Bengal". The *Adina Masjid,* the *Eklakhi tomb, Sath Gumbad mosque,* the *Lotan Masjid* and the *Dakhil Darwaza* are some of the best structures erected in Bengal. The Gujarat style of architecture is the most remarkable among the different provincial forms. The *Jami Masjid* at Cambay, the *Jami mosque* at Ahmadabad, the *Tin Darwaza* and the *Jami Masjid* at Champaner are some of the best structures erected in Gujarat. The *Atala Masjid,* the *Jhanjhiri Masjid, Lal Darwaza Masjid* and the *Jami Masjid*—all in Jaunpur—the fortress of Mandu, *Jami Masjid* at Mandu, the *Hindola Mahal* and the *Jahaz Mahal*—the two in Malwa—are some of the best structures of the period.

### Literature

Though the Sultanate period did not experience a continuous outpour of literary activities, yet it was not entirely barren. Amir Khusrau was undoubtedly the greatest Persian poet of the period. He served as a poet under Muhammad Khan, the eldest son of Balban. After the death of his patron and benefactor, he served the Sultans of Delhi from the time of Balban to Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. Amir Khusrau's important works are *Khazyan-ul-Futuh, Tughluq nama* and *Tarikh-i-Alai.* Amir Hasan Dehlwi was a poet of considerable merit.

His compositions are considered as "musical and most pleasing". Minhaj-ud din's *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, Ziya-ud-din Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Shams-i-Siraj Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Ghulam Yahya-bin-Ahmad's *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* and Hasan Nizami's *Taj-ul-Masacir* are some of the important works of the period.

The Hindus also made notable contributions to the development of literature. They wrote on a variety of subjects. Ramanuja, Partha-sarathi Misra, Jayadeva, Ravivarman, Rupagoswami, Jimutavahana, Vachaspati Misra and a host of other literary luminaries flourished during the period. Sanskrit literature received great stimulus under the hands of these writers.

## 3. DOWNFALL OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

### 1. Personal despotism

The Delhi Sultanate hinged on personal despotism depending upon the character and personality of the ruler for its perpetuation. Everything went on well so long as strong and capable rulers were at the helm of affairs. As soon as the strong hand was removed, the inevitable collapse of the Sultanate started.

### 2. Overcentralisation and unwieldy nature of the empire

Overcentralisation was the characteristic feature of the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultan combined in his person all the powers. With the lapse of time, the extent of the empire reached its saturation point. The number of provinces rose to 23 at the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq. The evils of overcentralisation ate into the very vitals of the empire. Excessive work brought senselessness at the centre and paralysis at the extremities. When the empire became unwieldy, the Emperor was not able to exercise any effective control over the provincial Governors. As the Emperor was haunted by the menace of the provincial revolts and the shadow of the domestic traitor, he was not able to fully exert in the government of the country. When things went out of his control, the Governors asserted their independence. Ma'bar was the first province to proclaim its independence in 1334–35 during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq. Bengal followed suit in 1337. The repressive measures of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq led to the foundation of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in 1336 and the Muslim kingdom of Bahmani in 1347. During the reign of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the grand-nephew of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, the way of the Sultanate extended to a small principality

around Delhi. The extent of his Kingdom was sarcastically remarked in the following words: "The rule of the Lord of the world extends from Delhi to Palam". (Palam is a village, a few miles away from Delhi).

### 3. Responsibility of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq

The repressive measures of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq sowed the seeds for the dismemberment of the empire. The taxation of the Doab, the transfer of capital from Delhi to Devagiri, the issue of token currency, his absurd designs to conquer Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq and the Qarajal expedition depleted the state exchequer. Popular discontent mounted up and it found expression in a number of rebellions. The provincial Governors revolted against him. Ma'bar became independent in 1334–1335 and Bengal in 1337. His repressive measures led to the foundation of the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar in 1336 and the Bahmani Kingdom in 1347. The entire region south of the Krishna and Tungabhadra was lost to the Sultan.

### 4. Responsibility of Firuz Tughluq

Firuz Tughluq was essentially a man of peace. He allowed a free hand to the *Ulema* in State affairs He revived the much despised *jagir* system and encouraged the slave system. He was no great soldier. He made no serious attempt to recover the lost provinces of the Deccan, Bengal, Sind and Rajasthan. In the words of R. C. Majumdar: "Although the reign of Firuz was marked by milderness and beneficent activities, in striking contrast to that of his predecessor, it also undermined to a large extent, the foundation of the Sultanate...On the whole, in spite of peace, prosperity, and contentment that prevailed during the long reign of Firuz Shah, no one can possibly doubt that his policy and administrative measures contributed to a large extent to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate, and accelerated the process of decline that had already set in during his predecessor's reign".

### 5. The anti-Hindu policy of the Sultans

Most of the Sultans of Delhi followed an intolerant policy towards the Hindus who formed the majority in the land. The sack of Somanath temple by Mahmud of Ghazni, the reduction of Hindus to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water, the helots of the empire by Ala-ud-din Khilji, the imposition of *jizya* on the Brahmins by Firuz Tughluq and the wanton destruction of temples by Sikandar Lodi wounded the tender feelings of the Hindus. The pent-up feel-

ings of the Hindus found expression in a number of revolts against the authority of the Sultans.

### 6. Timur's Invasion of India

Timur's Invasion of India in 1398 gave a stunning blow to the tottering empire. He bled the country white and killed thousands of Hindus. He left India in 1399, "after inflicting on India more misery than ever before been inflicted by any conqueror in a single invasion". Confusion and chaos prevailed in Northern India after the departure of Timur. He left Delhi, a desolate city. Famine went hand in hand with pestilence and wrought untold misery on the people. The Tughluq empire was shattered to pieces. The wholesale massacre of the Hindus in which Timur indulged, estranged the feelings of both the Hindus and the Muslims.

### 7. Responsibility of Ibrahim Lodi

Ibrahim Lodi was the last Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate. His empire had already shrunk into smaller dimensions. His sway did not extend beyond Delhi, Agra, Chanderi, the Doab, Jaunpur, a part of Bihar and Biyana. He was an uncompromising ruler who harassed and humiliated the nobles in many ways. It was no wonder that Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of the Punjab, and Alam Khan, an uncle of Ibrahim Lodi, extended invitations to Babur to invade Hindustan. The country also abounded in traitors, adventurers and opportunists upon whom the shower of coins and bestowal of titles worked wonders. By his unstatesmanlike acts, Ibrahim Lodi drove the last nail into the coffin of the Delhi Sultanate. When things drifted from bad to worse, Babur invaded Hindustan, defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526. In the words of Ishwari Prasad: "the battle of Panipat placed the empire of Delhi in Babur's hands. The power of the Lodi dynasty was shattered to pieces and the sovereignty of Hindustan passed to the Chaghatai Turks".

## 4. THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The Sultanate period witnessed one of those rare and remarkable events in the sphere of religion which goes by the name Bhakti movement. With the advent of the Arabs and Muslims, the Aryan purity was lost. Many people embraced Islam and India was fast becoming a house divided into different religions. As the state-sponsored religion, Islam made rapid strides. The Bhakti movement rose as a reaction against the advance of Islam. Again it may be considered as

the result of the vehement criticism by the Muslims on Hinduism as the religion of multiple Gods with its obnoxious caste system. The exponents of this movement preached "Bhakti" or "Devotion" as the means of attaining salvation instead of "*Gnana*" or "Wisdom"—the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. From a logical point of view, it may be considered as an "escapist" tendency on the part of the Hindus who were oppressed hard and sought their solace from their religion. The movement had in its aims the reformation of Hinduism and the unification of Hindu and Muslim sentiments. The chief exponents of this movement were Ramanuja, Ramananda, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Kabir, *etc.*

## Ramanuja

The Bhakti movement may be considered as born with the advent of Ramanuja—the great Vaishnavite leader of the 12th century. Born at Sriperumbudur, he sought asylum at the Hoysala court in order to escape the persecution of the Chola King, who wanted him to become a Saivite. He believed God as "*Saguna Iswara*"—an entity with virtues and qualities. He had many followers. The chief among them was Ramananda.

## Ramananda

Ramananda flourished in the 14th century. As a wandering sage, Ramananda spread the message of Ramanuja in every nook and corner of the country. He did away with the caste system and his disciples came from all religions and castes. This was his unique contribution. Kabir was one of his followers.

## Vallabhacharya

A Telugu Brahmin by birth, he held the view that individual souls attain salvation and find unison with *Brahman* through *Bhakti* alone. He preached the worship of Krishna. Later on, his teachings were wrongly interpreted to mean the pursuance of worldly belongings as the means of attaining salvation and hence brought the name "Epicureanism of the East" for his philosophy.

## Chaitanya

Chaitanya was born in 1485. He was the greatest exponent of the Bhakti Cult. Even as a youth, Chaitanya showed remarkable literary talents. At his twenty-fifth year, he became a *Sanyasi* wandering and propagating the Krishna Cult as Vallabhacharya did. His belief was that through "Love and devotion" one can realise "the personal pre-

sence of God". He cared the least for casteism and ceremonial forms of religion. His influence was really marked.

## Kabir

Kabir was one of the disciples of Ramananda. He was the first to preach Hindu-Muslim unity. "He was the first leader of medieval religious movement to make a conscious effort in this direction". He said that *Ram* and *Rahim* were the same. As the adopted son of a Muhammedan weaver, his works were tinged with high Hindu philosophy and Muslim traditions. His time is fixed as the closing years of the fifteenth century. His message was the religion of love and he passionately pleaded for the unity of the Hindus and Muslims. He too was against the "rituals and external formalities" of religion.

## Nanak

The Sikhs or disciples who were organised into a sect by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was born in 1469 in a village in Lahore district. From very early days of his life, he was of a religious bent of mind. In an age of religious fervour, he preached goodwill and co-operation among Hindus and Muslims. He struck a happy balance between ritualistic Brahminism and authoritative Muhammedanism. The study of *Puran* and *Koran* convinced him that there was no Hindu and no Mussulman. He exhorted the people to worship one Invincible God, lead a virtuous life and show toleration to other creeds. He preached the unity of God, condemned idolatry, discouraged asceticism and preached a crusade against blind orthodox. He was more a reformist than a reactionary and established a new religion suiting to the needs of the time. According to him: "Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs, places of cremation or sitting in attitudes of contemplations. Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries or in bathing at places of pilgrimage. Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world. Thus shalt thou find the way to religion", Guru Nanak died in 1539.

## Reformers of Maharashtra

The hilly regions of Maharashtra produced the sturdy defenders and many reformers of Indian History. Particular mention should be made of Jnaneswar, Namadev (13th and 14th centuries respectively). Eknath and Tukaram (15th and 16th centuries respectively). Their message was the unity of God, and Bhakti, the way of attaining Salvation. They were unanimous in pleading for the unity of Hindus and

Muslims.

## Conclusion

After Buddhism, the Bhakti movement was the only religious movement which evoked so much of response from the people. It had as its twin aims the revival of Hinduism and the unification of Hindu and Muslim sentiments. With the simplification and liberalisation of caste system, considerable success was achieved in its first aim. But the movement failed to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. The theory that *Ram* and *Rahim* are one and the same God was not accepted and Hindu Muslim relations were strained and continued to remain tense even afterwards. However, a happy accidental benefit was that the vernacular literatures flourished as the preachers of this movement spoke to the people in their tongue.

CHAPTER XVI

# RISE OF BAHMANI AND VIJAYANAGAR

## 1. THE BAHMANI KINGDOM

### Foundation of the Bahmani Kingdom

The repressive measures of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq led to the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom. The entire region south of the Krishna and Tungabadhra was lost to Muhammad The Sultan recalled Qutlugh Khan, the Governor of Devagiri, for his inability to cope with the collection of revenue. The recall of the popular Governor led to popular discontent in the province. The foreign nobles known as *Amir-i-Sadah* now fomented troubles. Aziz Khummar, the Governor of Malwa, murdered many foreign nobles. The foreign nobles in Gujarat, too, rebelled against the Sultan. The Governor of Gujarat was not able to suppress the rebellion. The rebels put to death Aziz. The Sultan, however, put down the revolt in Gujarat. The foreign nobles in Devagiri now started the offensive and occupied Devagiri. The Sultan proceeded to Devagiri to put down the rebellion. As a rebellion again broke out in Gujarat, the Sultan was forced to proceed towards Gujarat. The absence of the Sultan from Devagiri gave an excellent opportunity for the foreign nobles under their leader Hasan Gangu to lay the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom in 1347.

### POLITICAL HISTORY

### Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah (1347-58)

Hasan Gangu ascended the throne of Devagiri under the title of Abul Muzaffar Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah. He transferred his capital to Gulbarga. Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's death and Firuz Tughluq's disinclination to reconquer the territories in the Deccan gave an excellent opportunity to Bahman Shah to expand his territories at the expense of the Sultanate. He conquered Goa, Dabhol, Kolhapur and Telingana. After carving out a big kingdom, he died in 1358. Histerritories extended from Wainganga river in the north to the Krishna in the south and from Daulatabad in the west to portions of the Western Telingana including the strong fortress of Bhongir in the east. For the sake of administrative convenience, he divided the country into four *tarafs* or provinces, *viz.*, Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar.

### Muhammad Shah I (1358-75)

Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah was succeeded by his son, Muhammad Shah I. He had to contend with the Hindu rulers of Warrangal and Vijayanagar. His reign marked the beginning of the long-drawn-out struggle between the Bahmani Sultans and the Vijayanagara Rayas. The bone of contention was the Raichur Doab. He defeated Kapaya Nayaka, the ruler of Warrangal. He got from him Golkunda and a huge war indemnity. Muhammad Shah defeated Bukka, the Vijayanagara ruler, and slaughtered a number of women and children. He died in 1375.

### Ala-ud-din Mujahid Shah (1375-78)

Muhammad Shah was succeeded by his son, Ala-ud-din Mujahid Shah. He undertook two expeditions against Vijayanagar. But the two attempts failed. He was murdered by his cousin Daud who then usurped the throne. Daud remained in power for less than a month. He was assassinated by the followers of Mujahid.

### Muhammad Shah II (1378-97)

Daud was succeeded by his brother, Muhammad Shah II. He was essentially a man of peace. He was of a scholarly bent of mind. He patronised men of letters. For his deep erudition, he earned the nickname Aristotle. He had the welfare of his people in his mind. When a famine broke out in the country, he made speedy arrangements for the transport of grain from Malwa and Gujarat to the famine-stricken areas. He set up a number of orphanages in the country. He died in 1397.

### Firuz Shah (1397–1422)

After the death of Muhammad Shah II, his two sons, Ghiyas-ud-din and Shams-ud-din ruled the country for a very short period. The throne was then captured by Firuz Shah, one of the cousins of the late Sultan. He ascended the throne under the title of Taj-ud-din Firuz Shah. He undertook three expeditions against Vijayanagar. The bone of contention continued to be the Raichur Doab. At the end of the expedition, the *status quo* was maintained and the Raichur Doab remained with the Vijayanagar empire. The defeat suffered by Firuz during the third campaign drooped his spirits. Given already to much vices, he became a feeble debauchee. Realising his position, he abdicated the throne in favour of his brother, Ahmad Shah. Firuz died in

1422. Firuz is considered as an enlightened ruler. He founded the city of Firuzabad. He delighted himself in the company of learned men. He had a large harem consisting of women of different nationalities. Being an accomplished linguist, he could boast of speaking to each and everyone in her own tongue. With the death of Firuz, the 'Gulbarga period' of the Bahmani dynasty came to an end.

### Ahmad Shah (1422-36)

With the assumption of power by Ahmad Shah begins the "Bidar period" in the Bahmani dynasty. Ahmad Shah transferred his capital to Bidar some time about 1425. He continued the aggressive policy of his brother against Vijayanagar. He undertook an expedition against Devaraya II of Vijayanagar. After this expedition, he fitted out an expedition against Warrangal. He defeated and killed the ruler. Warrangal was incorporated with the Bahmani kingdom. Ahmad clashed with the rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. While he was able to assert his authority in Malwa, he was not able to do the same in Gujarat. He died in 1436.

### Ala-ud-din Ahmad (1436-58)

Ala-ud-din Ahmad subdued the Hindu chiefs of the Konkan. He reduced the Raja of Sangamesvar and married his daughter who was noted for her matchless and surpassing beauty. He undertook an expedition against Vijayanagar and defeated Devaraya II. In a subsequent war, he again defeated Devaraya II who agreed to pay tribute. Ala-ud-din Ahmad built an hospital in the capital city. He patronised men of letters. He died in 1458.

### Humayun (1458-61)

Ala-ud-din Ahmad was succeeded by Humayun. For his cruelty, he earned the title *Zalim* (Cruel). He inflicted brutal punishments for trivial things. His reign witnessed the outbreak of a number of rebellions in the country. He put down all the rebellions with an iron hand. After perpetrating so many atrocities, he died in 1461.

### Nizam Shah (1461-63)

Humayun was succeeded by his son, Nizam Shah. He was only a lad of eight years when he came to the throne. A Council of Regency consisting of the Queen-Mother, Mahmud Gawan and Khwaja Jahan carried on the administration of the country. The combined forces of Orissa and Telingana made inroads into the Bahmani Kingdom But they were beaten back, thanks to the military leadership of Mahmud

Gawan and Khwaja Jahan. Mahmud Khilji, the Sultan of Malwa, attacked the Bahmani kingdom and defeated the Bahmani forces. Mahmud Gawan appealed to the ruler of Gujarat for help. The timely help rendered by the ruler of Gujarat made Mahmud Khilji retire. He made another attempt to conquer the Bahmani kingdom. But that was also foiled. Nizam Shah died in 1463.

### Muhammad Shah III (1463-82)

Nizam Shah was succeeded by his younger brother, Muhammad Shah III. He was only a lad of nine years when he came to the throne. The administration of the country was continued by the Council of Regency till 1466. As Khwaja Jahan misappropriated public funds, he was executed in 1466. Thenceforward Mahmud Gawan became the Prime Minister in which capacity he continued till his execution in 1481. He ably served his master. (Refer to the career of Mahmud Gawan for other details of the reign of Muhammad Shah III). Mahmud Gawan was executed at the orders of the Sultan in 1481. Muhammad Shah III died in 1482.

### Mahmud Shah (1482-1518)

Muhammad Shah III was succeeded by his son, Mahmud Shah. Ever since the Bahmani kingdom came into existence, the 'foreigners' like Afghan and Mughal amirs wielded great influence in the government of the country. With the lapse of time, they grew in strength and power. This policy of entertaining foreign elements in the country roused the jealousy of the 'Deccanis'. It resulted in a perpetual feud between the two factions. It assumed greater dimensions with the passage of time. The one tried to outwit the other in their struggle to capture power. In their anxiety to capture power, the 'Deccanis' basely contrived to murder the Sultan. But it was detected and the Deccani conspirators were mercilessly butchered. Being already a pleasure-seeker, Mahmud Shah adopted an indifferent attitude in the affairs of the State. Real power passed into the hands of Qasim Barid, a Turki. The provincial Governors refused to acknowledge the suzerinaty of the Sultan. He held sway over a small area around the capital city. After the death of Mahmud Shah in 1518, the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom became a *fait accompli*. He was succeeded by four Sultans who were mere tools in the hands of Amir Barid, the son of Qasim Barid. With the death of Kalimullah, the last Sultan of the Bahmani kingdom in 1538, the Bahmani dynasty came to an end. On the debris of the Bahmani kingdom sprang up five independent Muslim

dynasties. They were the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar (1484–1574), the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar (1490–1633), the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur (1490–1686), the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golkunda (1512–1687) and the Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar (1526 or 1527–1619).

## CAREER OF MAHMUD GAWAN (1411–1481)

### Early life

Mahmud Gawan was born in the Kingdom of Gilan on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in 1411. He belonged to an aristocratic family. "A voluntary exile from the country of his birth and youth", Mahmud Gawan arrived at Dabhol on the western coast of India in 1453. Though he came for trade and commerce, destiny determined otherwise.

### Early Service

When he came to the Bahmani kingdom, it was ruled by Ala-ud-din Ahmad (1436–58). Mahmud Gawan was admitted as an Amir in the Court of Ala-ud-din Ahmad. He made Mahmud Gawan a Mansabdar of 1000. Humayun, the next ruler, conferred on him the title *Malikut-Tujjar*. After the death of Humayun, his minor son, Nizam Shah came to power. A Council of Regency consisting of the Queen-Mother, Mahmud Gawan and Khwaja Jahan carried on the administration of the country The combined forces of Orissa and Telingana made inroads into the Bahmani kingdom. But they were beaten back, thanks to the military leadership of Mahmud Gawan and Khwaja Jahan. Mahmud Khilji, the Sultan of Malwa, attacked the Bahmani kingdom. Mahmud Gawan appealed to the ruler of Gujarat for help. The timely help rendered by the ruler of Gujarat, made Mahmud Khilji retire. Mahmud Gawan also foiled another attempt of Mahmud Khilji to conquer the Bahmani kingdom.

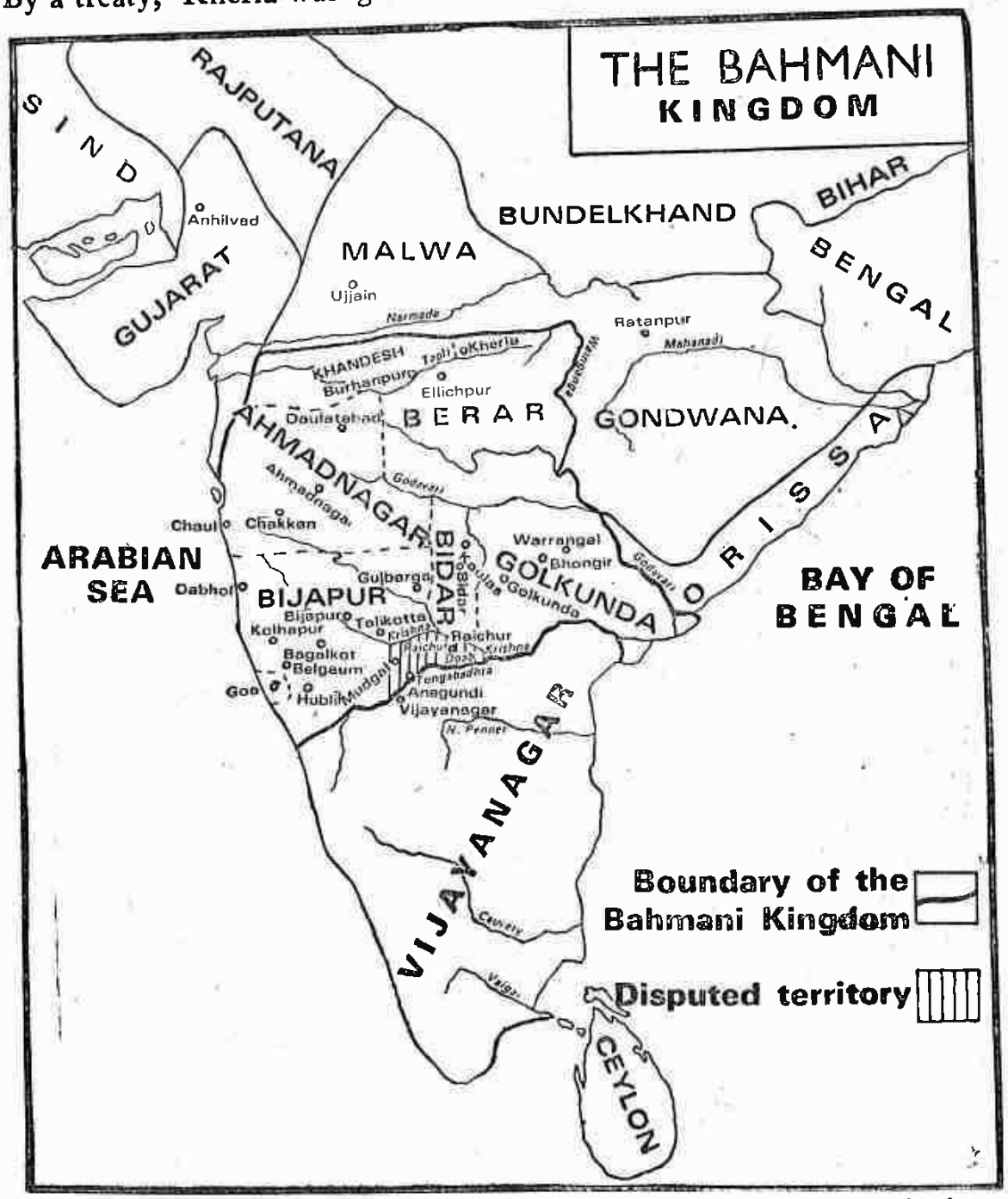
During the rule of Muhammad Shah III (1463–82), the administration of the country was continued by the Council of Regency till 1466. As Khwaja Jahan misappropriated public funds, he was executed in 1466. With the removal of Khwaja, the stage was set for the ascendancy of Mahmud Gawan. He was appointed as Prime Minister in 1466 in which capacity he continued till his execution in 1481.

## Ascendancy of Gawan

### War with Malwa

Mahmud Gawan diligently and loyally served his master Muham-

mad Shah III for 15 years. During the administration of Gawan, the Bahmani kingdom increased in size and power. In 1468 the fortress of Kherla was captured from Mahmud Khilji, the Sultan of Malwa. By a treaty, Kherla was given back to Malwa and Berar was retained




by the Deccan. It was through the diplomacy of Gawan that the long strife was put an end to and ties of friendship between the two countries established.

## The Western Campaigns

Bagalkot and Hubli were reduced. An immense booty was taken

from the local chiefs. They promised to pay tribute. In 1470 Mahmud Gawan himself undertook an expedition to Konkan. He completely subjugated and consolidated Konkan. Goa was conquered from the Raya of Vijayanagar. Antur and Virakhera which fell into the hands of the Maratha chiefs during the Malwa campaigns were recaptured. Belgaum also fell into the hands of the Bahmani kingdom. The new acquisitions to the Bahmani kingdom enormously enriched the resources of the country. Athanasius Nikitin, the Russian traveller, who visited Bidar in 1470 described it as "the chief town of the whole of Muhammedan Hindustan". According to his testimony, the country abounded in wealth and riches.

### Other Campaigns

A revolt under the leadership of Hamir Rai, a vassal of the Bahmani, broke out in Telingana It was put down with an iron hand Orissa was subdued. Mahmud Gawan made Khandesh a protectorate of the Bahmani kingdom.

### Administrative Reforms

Gawan introduced a number of administrative reforms. During the time of Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, the kingdom had been divided into four provinces, each under a *tarafdar*. As the kingdom grew in size, the size of the provinces also increased. The power of the *tarafdars* also increased. But hitherto no attempt was made to recast the provinces. Mahmud Gawan divided the kingdom into 8 provinces. In recasting the provinces, he reduced the size of the old provinces by one half. In order to curb the powers of the *tarafdars*, he detached some areas from their jurisdiction and placed them under the direct control of the Sultan

### Military Reforms

Gawan thoroughly reorganised the military administration. Formerly the *tarafdars* had unlimited powers with regard to the military administration of the Provinces. He left only one fort under the command of each *tarafdar*. The *qiladars* or commandants of all other forts were appointed by the central government and made answerable to it. Formerly mansabs and jagirs were given to persons without taking into account their loyalty and ability. The number of troops maintained by them rarely agreed with the number fixed. For the upkeep of the troops, grants of lands were made to mansabdars and jagirdars who rarely kept the fixed number. Mahmud thoroughly overhauled the system. He fixed the salary of the mansabdars and

stipulated the number of soldiers to be kept by them. If the mansabdars kept a lower number of troops, they were asked to refund the amount proportionate to that amount to the treasury.

### Revenue Reforms

Mahmud undertook in a systematic way the measurement of the land. He fixed the boundaries of the villages and towns. He made a thorough enquiry into the assessment of revenue. These reforms enabled him to properly assess the income of the State and to furnish a Record of Rights.

### Murder of Mahmud Gawan

Ever since the Bahmani kingdom came into existence, the 'foreigners' like Afghans and Mughal amirs wielded great influence in the government of the country With the lapse of time, the foreign Muslims who were also called 'pardesis' grew in strength and power. These soldiers of fortune and adventure came from Persia, Turkey, Central Asia, Arabia and Afghanistan. The policy of entertaining foreign elements in the country roused the jealousy of the 'Deccani' Muslims. It resulted in a perpetual feud between the two factions. It assumed greater dimensions with the lapse of time. The one tried to outwit the other in the struggle to capture power. Towards the close of the 14th century, the 'foreigners' were at the height of their power. By means fair and foul, the 'Deccanis' managed to gain the upper hand during the latter part of the reign of Ahmad Shah (1422–36) In 1466 a large number of 'foreigners' were mercilessly butchered by them. In an expedition against Raja Sankar Rao Shirke in South Konkan, the Bahmani forces suffered a major reverse and the survivors retreated to the fort of Chakkan The 'Deccanis' convinced the Sultan that the failure of the campaign was due to the inefficiency of the 'foreigners'. With the consent of the Sultan, they were lured out of Chakkan and mercilessly butchered. In their anxiety to capture power, the 'Deccanis' basely contrived to murder the Sultan. But it was detected and the 'Deccani' conspirators were mercilessly butchered and once again 'foreigners' regained power. It drooped the spirits of the 'Deccanis' but not their treachery. In 1481, they basely contrived the murder of Mahmud Gawan. "The false accusation and violent death of this upright minister constitutes one of the tragedies of medieval India". The conspirators forged a letter purporting to be from Mahmud Gawan to the Raja of Orissa inviting him to invade the Deccan and brought that to the notice of the Sultan, Muhammad

Shah III. He fully believed the contents of the forged letter and ordered for the execution of Gawan in 1481. He submitted to the royal will. Thus one of the basest murders in the history of India was accomplished in 1481. "With him departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani Kingdom". The Bahmani edifice began to crumble to pieces after this incident.

### Estimate

Mahmud Gawan was undoubtedly the greatest of the Muhammedan administrators of the Deccan. He was "a shrewd politician and statesman". His policy of compromise paid rich dividends. His intense loyalty to the Bahmani throne was a noteworthy trait in his character. He excelled in military strategy. As a man of learning, he was well-versed in many subjects. He was himself a great writer. He loved the company of the learned and patronised them. He led an extremely simple life. He believed and practised the old adage of "simple living and high thinking". There was only one serious blot in his character. He persecuted non-Muslims. Barring this there was no other blemish in his character. In the words of Sherwani: "He [Mahmud Gawan] excelled as a diplomat, as a soldier, as an administrator and as a man of letters—in all the walks of life in only one of which it is generally the fortune of any man to enter and perhaps to excel".

## 2. VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

### Origin

The early history of Vijayanagar is shrouded in obscurity. The repressive measures of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq led to the rise of Vijayanagar. The political condition of India in the 14th century was in the melting pot. It provided great opportunities for the rise of new kingdoms in the south. Ma'bar, the southern most province of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, proclaimed its independence in 1334-35. To teach a lesson to the refractory Governor, he proceeded to Ma'bar. He halted at Warrangal owing to the rebellion in that region. He made a new arrangement for the administration of Telingana. He divided Telingana into two parts and entrusted the administration of the eastern division with its capital at Warrangal in the hands of a general of the old Kakatiya kingdom after converting him to the Islamic faith. Kapaya Nayak or Krishna Nayak, the then ruler of Warrangal, organised a confederacy of 75 chiefs. Ballala III, the Hoysala King, also made common cause with him. They stirred up the national feeling

of the people of Telingana. The national revolt assumed the colour of a Hindu rebellion. Warrangal fell into their hands and thus the Andhra kingdom was lost to Muhammad-bin-Tughluq. Though he failed at Warrangal, he achieved success at Kampili. Harihara and Bukka were taken prisoners from Kampili. They were forced to embrace the Islamic faith and subsequently appointed Governor and deputy Governor of Kampili. They were not able to restore order in the province. As the national upsurge in the region assumed greater proportions, they were defeated and driven out of the country. The fugitive brothers wandered from place to place and finally sought the help of sage Vidyaranya. Thanks to his advice, they established their stronghold at Anegundi, on the northern bank of the Tungabhadra. They again embraced Hinduism and laid the foundation of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1336.

## POLITICAL HISTORY

The Vijayanagar Empire which was founded in 1336 had many vicissitudes in its political history. For more than three centuries it stood forth as the champion of Hinduism and acted as a check on the penetration of the Muslims into the south. There were altogether four dynasties in the history of Vijayanagar, *viz*, Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu.

### Sangama Dynasty

### Harihara I (1336-56)

Harihara I and Bukka I who laid the foundation of the dynasty called it after the name of their father, Sangama. As soon as Harihara I came to the throne, he set himself to the task of consolidating his position. He transferred his capital from Anegundi to Vijayanagara or Vidyanagara. He built the fort of Udayagiri in the Nellore district. It served as the capital for his eastern province. He made his brother, Bukka, his Yuvaraja and co-regent. He brought more lands under the plough by permitting the peasants to cut down the forest. He divided the country into *sthalas*, *nadus* and *simas*. Officers were appointed to collect revenue and to look after the local administration. By dint of his ability, he increased the size of his kingdom by new additions. His brother, Bukka captured from Ballala III the fortress of Penugonda. It served as a base for future operations against the Hoysalas. Ballala III in his encounter with Vijayanagara lost a portion of his territory along his eastern frontier. Ballala III in his anxiety to extend his

dominions in the south came into clash with the Sultan of Ma'bar. In the battle that ensued, Ballala III was defeated, imprisoned and put to death. As Ballala IV the son and successor of Ballala III was a weakling, his nobles deserted and left him in the lurch. The Hoysala kingdom fell an easy prey to Vijayanagara in 1346. The incorporation of the Hoysala kingdom roused the jealousy of the Kadambas of Banavasi. But the Kadamba King was defeated and his dominions were incorporated with the Vijayanagara Empire. He sent an expedition against the Sultan of Madura. He defeated and imprisoned him. The establishment of the Bahmani kingdom in 1347 put an end to the ambitious designs of Harihara I in the south. The schemes of Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, riveted the attention of Harihara to the defence of his northern frontier. After carving out a kingdom, Harihara I died in 1356.

### Bukka I (1356-77)

As Harihara I died without an issue, Bukka I assumed the reins of government. He set himself to the task of unifying and consolidating his position. During the reign of Harihara I, he handed over the administration of some of the provinces to his brothers. After the death of his brothers, their sons ruled over the provinces as independent masters. As such a system weakened and undermined the central authority, Bukka I appointed his own sons as Governors of the provinces and made them cultivate traditions of loyalty and obedience to the central authority. By about 1360, Bukka I established his sway over the Tamil country extending as far south as the southern Pennar and the Kolladam rivers. His reign marked the beginning of the long-drawn out struggle between the Bahmani Sultans and the Vijayanagara Rayas. The bone of contention was the Raichur Doab. Muhammad Shah I, the Bahmani Sultan, demanded from Bukka I the forts of Raichur and Mudgal along with their adjoining territories as far as the Krishna. Bukka I in his turn laid claim to the fort of Kaulas. According to the testimony given by Firishta, Muhammad Shah I defeated Bukka I and slaughtered a number of women and children. He dictated peace terms favourable to him. But the truth is that the terms of the treaty were favourable to Bukka because the river Krishna was fixed as the boundary between the two kingdoms. Bukka I wrested from the Reddis of Kondavidu, Ahobalam and Vinukonda with their dependent territories. He defeated and killed the Sultan of Madura. He incorporated the Sultanate of Madura into his kingdom. After

consolidating his position, Bukka I died in 1377. He can be considered as the real architect of the Vijayanagara Empire.

### Harihara II (1377-1404)

The reign of Harihara II was marred by a few rebellions. Rebellions broke out in Konkan, the Tamil country and other provinces. But he put down the rebellions with an iron hand. Ala-ud-din Mujahid Shah, the Bahmani Sultan, undertook an expedition to Vijayanagara. But he was defeated at Adoni. Harihara II followed up his success by invading Konkan and Northern Karnataka. He captured Goa, Chaul and Dabhol. Firuz Shah, the Bahmani Sultan, invaded Vijayanagara. After the war, the *status quo* was maintained.

### Devaraya I (1406–22)

After the death of Harihara II, his three sons, Virupaksha I, Bukka II and Devaraya II engaged themselves in a war of succession. Immediately after the death of Harihara II, Virupaksha I came to the throne. But he ruled for only one year. He was overthrown by Bukka II. Devaraya I usurped the throne in 1406. During his reign of 16 years, he carried on incessant wars with the Bahmani Sultan, the Velamas of Rachakonda and the Reddis of Kondavidu. The result of the wars with these adversaries ended in the *status quo* being maintained. The reign of Devaraya I marked the beginning of that long-drawn-out struggle between the Gajapatis of Orissa and the Rayas which lasted for nearly a century and a quarter. During his reign, Vijayanagar became "the city of learning and the abode of the Goddess Saraswati".

### Ramachandra and Vijaya I

After the death of Devaraya I, the order of succession to the throne is not definitely known. According to a literary source, Ramachandra, the son of Devaraya I, came to the throne immediately after the death of his father and he ruled for six months. Ramachandra was succeeded by his brother, Vijaya I who is assigned a reign period varying from six months to two years. But evidence available from inscriptions shows that he ruled from 1422 to 1430. His reign was very uneventful.

### Devaraya II (1422-46)

Vijaya I was succeeded by his son, Devaraya II. The exact date of his accession to the throne is not definitely known. Devaraya II also carried on his rivalry against the Bahmanis, the traditional enemy

of the Vijayanagara Rayas. Ahmad Shah, the Bahmani Sultan, undertook an expedition against Vijayanagar in 1423. Epigraphic evidence shows that Devaraya II defeated Ahmad Shah. It further shows that Devaraya II won two other victories against the rulers of Andhra and Orissa. After the death of Ahmad Shah, Ala-ud-din Ahmad came to power. He undertook two expeditions (1435–36 and 1443-1444) against Vijayanagar. According to the version given by Firishta, Devaraya II tasted defeat on both occasions. But the authenticity of the statement is highly doubtful. Devaraya II undertook an expedition against the Ceylonese and compelled them to pay tribute. In the midst of his warlike activities, Devaraya II found time to construct temples and promote fine arts.

### Vijayaraya II (1446-47) and Mallikarjuna (1446-65)

After the death of Devaraya II, his son Mallikarjuna came to power. But literary and epigraphic evidences show that Vijayaraya II, the younger brother of Devaraya II, also ruled the country along with Mallikarjuna. As Mallikarjuna was an incompetent King, the days of the Sangama Dynasty were numbered. In his encounter with the Gajapati of Orissa, Mallikarjuna lost considerable territory besides the coastal Andhra. Vijayanagar lost the two strategic forts of Kondavidu and Udayagiri. If a literary tradition is to be believed, Mallikarjuna was assassinated by his cousin Virupaksha II.

### Virupaksha II (1465-1485)

As Virupaksha II was an incompetent King, he was not able to keep some of the provinces under his control. Confusion and chaos prevailed in the country. In his encounter with the Bahmani Sultan, Muhammad Shah III, he lost the sea-board of Northern Konkan and a major portion of Northern Karnataka. When things were heading towards disaster, Saluva Narasimha, the chief of Chandragiri in Chittor district became the deliverar of the day. He had already consolidated his position in Chittor and the two Arcots and had captured Udayagiri from the Gajapati of Orissa. He dethroned Virupaksha II and usurped the throne in 1485. This is known as the first usurpation. He laid the foundation of the Saluva dynasty.

## Saluva Dynasty

### Saluva Narasimha (1485-90)

The usurper Narasimha was not able to enforce his authority in the kingdom. His one-time supporters and friends refused to accept

his overlordship. He was obliged to carry on a protracted fight with the *Palaigars* of Ummattur in the Mysore district and Sangitapura in the Tulu-nadu. While he succeeded in establishing his authority over Tulu-nadu, Ummattur remained unsubdued. Narasimha lost Udayagiri to the Gajapati of Orissa.

### Narasa Nayaka (1490-1503)

At the time of the death of Narasimha, he had only two minor sons. Prior to his death, he appointed his minister, Narasa Nayaka as the guardian to his minor sons. After the death of Narasimha, Narasa Nayaka placed on the throne, Timma, the eldest son of his master. But as he was too young to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of the State, Narasa Nayaka usurped the throne. This is known as the second usurpation. He became the *de facto* sovereign and the sons of his master became *de jure* sovereigns. Narasa Nayaka defeated the Chera, Chola and Pandya Kings. He also defeated the Gajapati of Orissa. He captured from Mahmud Shah, the Bahmani Sultan, the forts of Raichur and Mudgal. But they were soon recaptured by the Bahmani Sultan. He captured Seringapatam and established his sway over Karnataka and the Tamil country.

## Tuluva Dynasty

### Vira Narasimha (1503-1509)

After the death of Narasa Nayaka, his son, Vira Narasimha became the *de facto* sovereign. Immadi Narasimha, the younger son of Narasimha, who had then come of age wanted to become the real ruler. But he was assassinated by Vira Narasimha who then proclaimed himself King in 1505. He thus laid the foundation of the Tuluva dynasty. The Bahmani forces sent by Mahmud Shah captured the forts of Adoni and Kurnool. But they were wrested from them and conferred as fiefs on the Aravidu chiefs for their gallant and successful encounter with the Bahmani forces. Rebellions broke out in Karnataka and Tulu districts of the empire. While he completely brought under his control the Tulu district, he was a failure in Karnataka.

### KRISHNADEVARAYA (1509-1529)

Vira Narasimha was succeeded by his half-brother, Krishnadevaraya. He was the most distinguished member of the Tuluva dynasty and the greatest ruler of Vijayanagara. Under him the Vijayanagara empire reached the zenith of its glory and fame. As soon as he came to the throne, he realised that it was not a bed of roses. He was

surrounded by difficulties on all sides. The task of Krishnadevaraya was an uphill task indeed.

### Expedition against the Bahmani Kingdom

In the very first year of his reign, he had to contend with Mahmud Shah, the Bahmani Sultan, who declared a *jihad* on the infidels of Vijayanagara. All the nobles and chiefs who accepted his overlordship made common cause with him. In the war that ensued in 1509, Krishnadevaraya inflicted a crushing defeat on the Bahmani Sultan. The Sultan of Bijapur was killed in the encounter and the greatest insecurity prevailed in the infant state of Bijapur. Taking advantage of the chaotic condition prevailing in Bijapur, Krishnadevaraya captured the Raichur Doab in 1512. He followed up his success by capturing the forts of Gulbarga and Bidar. He restored the fallen Bahmani Sultan to his former position.

### Subjugation of Ummattur

Ummattur was the next target of attack of Krishnadevaraya. He wanted to avenge the wrongs done to his predecessor by the *Palaigar* of Ummattur. Seringapatam and Sivasamudram were the two strongholds of the *Palaigar* Krishnadevaraya marched at the head of a large army. The expedition proved to be a complete success. He captured from Gangaraja, the *Palaigar* of Ummattur, Seringapatam and Sivasamudram. The *Palaigar* fled from the field of battle and while fleeing, he had his watery grave in the Cauvery. He constituted the newly acquired territories from the *Palaigar* into a province with Seringapatam as its headquarters.

### War with Orissa

The provinces of Udayagiri and Kondavidu had been lost to Vijayanagara during the reign of the predecessors of Krishnadevaraya. In order to recover the provinces, Krishnadevaraya declared war on the Gajapati of Orissa. The war lasted from 1513 to 1518 during which period the Gajapati suffered major reverses. Krishnadevaraya wrested the two provinces from him. The war came to an end by a treaty signed in 1518. According to the terms of the treaty, the Gajapati gave his daughter in marriage to Krishnadevaraya and the latter surrendered all the territories north of the Krishna conquered from the Gajapati.

### War with Quli Qutb Shah of Golkunda

When Krishnadevaraya was busy with his operations in Orissa,

Quli Qutb Shah, the ruler of Telingana, made inroads into Vijayanagara territory and captured some places. Immediately after his return to his capital from the Orissa expedition, Krishnadevaraya despatched an army under Saluva Timma to Kondavidu to drive away the invader. Saluva Timma succeeded in defeating the army of Quli Qutb Shah and completely liberated the province from the hands of the invader.

## War with Bijapur

When Krishnadevaraya was busy in his campaign against Orissa and other eastern wars, Ismail Adil Khan, the Sultan of Bijapur, captured Raichur. Krishnadevaraya sent an army under Saluva Timma. The Muslim camp was sacked and an immense booty fell into his hands. Raichur was recaptured.

## Last years of Krishnadevaraya

The remaining years of Krishnadevaraya were not peaceful. He abdicated the throne in favour of his son. But the prince met with an unnatural death after a reign of eight months. As Krishnadevaraya suspected that the death of the prince was due to poison administered by Timma Dandanayaka, the son of Saluva Timma, the Raya imprisoned both of them. Timma Dandanayaka escaped from prison and raised the flag of insurrection. It was with very great difficulty that he put down the rebellion. During the last years of his reign, he was deeply concerned with the problem of nominating the heir-apparent to the throne. He set aside the claims of his eighteen month old son and his nephew (son of Vira Narasimha) as he considered them misfits for the imperial office. He nominated Achyuta, one of his half-brothers as his successor. After a glorious reign of 20 years, Krishnadevaraya died in 1529.

## Relations with the Portuguese

Krishnadevaraya maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese. In order to get horses for his army, he cultivated their friendship. The Portuguese also found it advantageous to cultivate the friendship of Krishnadevaraya because they could carry on profitable trade. He never encouraged their political designs. But for a small skirmish, he maintained friendly relations with them.

## Krishnadevaraya as a builder and patron of art and letters

Krishnadevaraya was a great builder. He constructed a number of dams, irrigation canals and temples. In memory of his wife, Nagala-

devi, he built a new city Nagalapur by name near Vijayanagar. Being a staunch Vaishnavite, he built a number of temples at Tirupati and Tiruvannamalai. The best specimen of the temple architecture of his period was the Hazare temple. The Vittala Swami Temple constructed by him is studded with sculptural works. Krishnadevaraya was a great patron of art and letters His reign is considered as the 'Augustan Age' of Telugu literature. His court was adorned by eight eminent Telugu poets called the *Ashtadiggajas*. The most celebrated of them were Allasani Peddana, Timmanna and Tenali Ramakrishna. Krishnadevaraya himself was an accomplished scholar. He wrote a Telugu poem "*Amukta-Malyada*" and a Sanskrit play, "*Ushaparinayam*". His munificence to scholars earned him the title, "*Andhra Bhoja*".

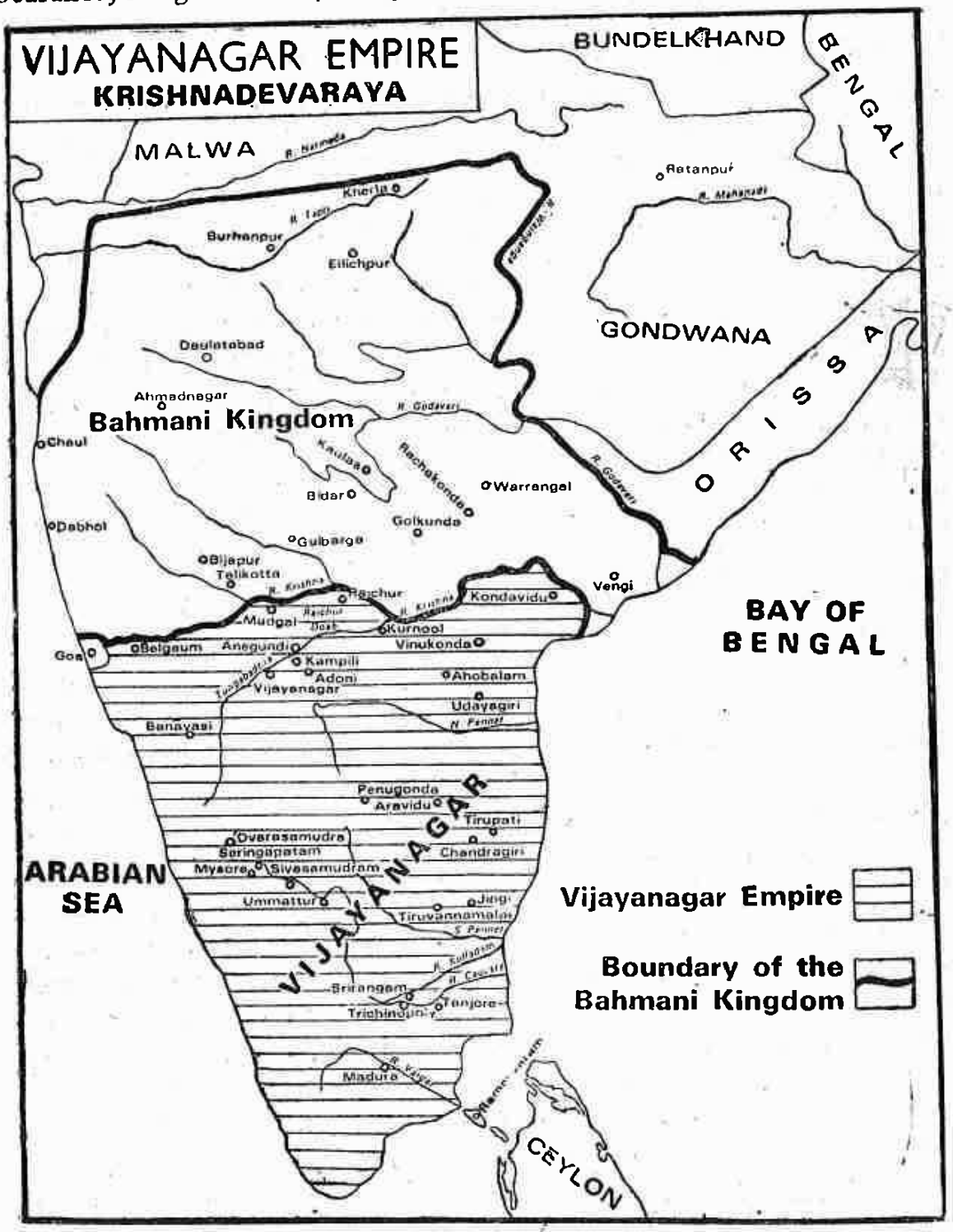
## Krishnadevaraya as a General and Administrator

Krishnadevaraya was a distinguished general. Whenever he commanded his army, he showed great military prowess. He won many laurels in battle-fields. He was a past-master in converting defeats into victories. He treated the fallen foe with great magnanimity. He took special care in giving medical help to the wounded soldiers. He was also a great administrator. He kept a vigilant watch on the provinces lest they might be maladministered. He followed a vigorous foreign policy. He brought more lands under the plough and paid the utmost attention to the welfare of the ryots. He abolished some vexatious taxes.

## Estimate

Krishnadevaraya was undoubtedly the greatest ruler among the Vijayanagara Kings. During his reign, the empire reached the zenith of its glory and fame. Paes, the Portuguese traveller, praises him in eloquent terms. According to him: "He is the most feared and perfect King that could possibly be.....He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage... he is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories". His reign marks the dawn of a new era in the literary history of South India. Though he patronised Vaishnavism, he followed a policy of religious toleration in a land of different faiths. In the words of Krishna Shastri: "Krishnadevaraya was in no way less famous for his religious zeal and catholicity. Krishnadevaraya's kindness to the fallen enemy, his acts of mercy and charity towards the residents of captured cities, his great military prowess which endeared him alike to his feuda-

tory chiefs and to his subjects, the royal reception and kindness that he invariably bestowed upon foreign embassies, his imposing personal appearance, his genial look, and polite conversation which distinguished




a pure and dignified life, his love for literature and for religion, and his solicitude for the welfare of his people, and above all, the most fabulous wealth that he conferred as endowments on temples and

Brahmanas, mark him out indeed as the greatest of the South Indian monarchs who sheds a lustre on the pages of history".

## Successors of Krishnadevaraya

Krishnadevaraya was succeeded by his half-brother Achyuta (1529-42). He brought to senses the refractory Viceroy of Madura and reduced to obedience the Raja of Travancore for his having given asylum to the Viceroy of Madura. Achyuta neglected the administration of the country. Real power passed into the hands of his two brothers-in-law, both named Tirumala. Internal dissensions shook up the Vijayanagara edifice. Achyuta was succeeded by his son, Venkata I in 1542. But he remained in power for not more than six months. Venkata I was succeeded by Sadasivaraya (1542–70), a nephew of Achyuta. He became a mere tool in the hands of his minister, Ramaraya, a member of the Aravidu dynasty. Ramaraya took sides with the Deccani Sultanates and tried all possible ways to wreck their power. But his diplomatic manoeuvres did not last long. The Deccani Sultanates sank their minor differences and rallied together.

## Battle of Talikotta (1565)

The five Deccani Sultanates with the exception of Berar organised a powerful coalition against Vijayanagar. The combined forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the Vijayanagara forces in the famous battle of Talikotta fought in 1565. Ramaraya was captured and put to death. Robert Sewell in his book "A Forgotten Empire" gives a graphic description of the destruction wrought on Vijayanagar in the following words: "The third day saw the beginning of the end. The victorious Mussulmans had halted on the field of battle for rest and refreshment, but now they had reached the capital, and from that time forward for a space of five months Vijayanagar knew no rest. The enemy had come to destroy, and they carried out their object relentlessly. They slaughtered the people without mercy, broke down the temples and palaces; and wreaked such savage vengeance on the abode of the kings, that, with the exception of a few great stone-built temples and walls, nothing now remains but a heap of ruins to mark the spot where once the stately building stood. They demolished the statues, and even succeeded in breaking the limbs of the huge Narasimha monolith...They lit huge fires in the magnificently decorated buildings forming the temple of Vitthalasvami near the river, and smashed its exquisite stone sculptures. With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after

day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city; teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors beggaring description".

The battle of Talikotta was not a decisive battle. It did not seal the doom of the Vijayanagar Empire because the members of the Aravidu dynasty ruled over Vijayanagar down to the third quarter of the 17th century. The Deccani Sultanates did not gain anything by the fall of Vijayanagar because they were soon engulfed in Mughal imperialism.

### Aravidu Dynasty

After the battle of Talikotta, Sadasivaraya, continued as a nominal ruler till 1570. But real power was appropriated by Tirumala, the brother of Ramaraya. In 1570 Sadasivaraya was murdered probably at the instigation of Tirumala who then usurped the throne. This is known as the third usurpation. Tirumala (1570–1572) laid the foundation of the Aravidu Dynasty Tirumala was succeeded by his son, Ranga II (1572–86). Ranga II was succeeded by his brother, Venkata II (1586–1614). He was the last great ruler of Vijayanagar. After his death, the empire began to disintegrate. Ranga III (1642–72) was the last ruler of Vijayanagar. The empire which lasted for more than three centuries came to an inglorious end after the reign of Ranga III. Several independent principalities with headquarters at Jinji, Tanjore, Madura and Mysore sprang up on the ruins of the Vijayanagar Empire.

## ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

### Central Government

#### (a) King

The King constituted the pivot of the administrative machinery. The foremost duty of the King was to protect the life and property of his subjects and redress their grievances. It was the duty of the King to preserve the social solidarity of the people. The King strained every nerve to promote the economic prosperity of the people. More lands were brought under the plough. Trade and commerce developed under his fostering care. He constituted the highest court of appeal. He administered even-handed justice. It was also the duty of the King to follow a vigorous foreign policy.

Though the King had great powers, he never behaved like a despot. He was a law-abiding monarch. An organised community, custom, public opinion and the Royal Council acted as checks on the autocratic tendencies of the King. The King had the welfare of his subjects at heart and undertook all possible measures to promote the welfare of the people. So we cannot accept the statement of Smith that "the Vijayanagar King was an autocrat of the most absolute possible kind unrestrained by any form of check".

**(b) Imperial Council**

The Imperial Council consisted of ministers, provincial governors, military commanders, priests and poets Apart from this large assembly, there was a smaller council corresponding to the *Mantri Parishad* of the olden days. It assisted the King in the day-to-day administration of the country. This Council of Ministers consisted of the Prime Minister, the heads of the departments and a few members of the blood royal. The members of the council continued in office during the pleasure of the King.

**(c) Secretariat**

An efficient civil service looked after the dreary details of the administration. But details are lacking with regard to the various officers and the exact nature of their work. Some of the officers of the State were the *Rayasams, Karanikkam, etc.* The important palace officers were the *Sarvanayaka, Tirumandira Olainayagam, Mudra Karta, Vasal Kariyam, etc.*

## Revenue Administration

Inscriptions and the writings of foreign travellers are the main sources for the study of the revenue administration of the country. The State derived its revenue from the land tax, property tax, commercial taxes, tax on industries, military contributions, social and communal taxes, judicial fines and miscellaneous items of income. The land tax was the main source of income to the State. The State due was usually one-sixth of the produce. The expenditure of the State was mainly on the maintenance of the army, public endowments and charities, irrigation and public works, the harem and the court.

## Justice and Police

The King was the highest court of appeal. Apart from the King's court, there was also a separate court at the centre presided over by a judge or a panel of judges. The provinces had their own courts. In

the outlying parts of the empire, the village assemblies, the temple trustees and the caste elders had their own courts. The punishments were very severe. The police was organised on efficient lines for the maintenance of peace and order. There was a police force maintained by the State and another by the people.

## Army

Though the King had an army of his own, he had to depend upon the soldiers supplied by the feudal lords in times of emergency. Abdur Razzak points out that the Vijayanagar army consisted of 11,00,000 fighting men and more than 1,000 elephants. The army of Krishnadevaraya during the Raichur campaign in 1520 was estimated by Nuniz to be 7,03,000 foot, 32,600 horses and 551 elephants. It appears from the above figures that the number of soldiers in the army fluctuated from time to time. It will suffice to state here that the standing army was very small when compared with the irregulars. The army consisted of the three divisions of infantry, cavalry and elephants. The Vijayanagar army as a whole was inefficient when compared with that of the Muslims. The Vijayanagara Kings maintained a small navy

## Provincial Government

For the sake of administrative convenience, the country was divided into *rajyas*. They were further sub-divided into districts, taluks and villages. The provinces were governed by Governors. Members of the blood royal were usually appointed Governors. The Governors exercised great powers and possessed local autonomy within their jurisdiction. The village was the lowest unit in the administration. The great degree of independence enjoyed by the provincial governments greatly undermined the stability of the Central government.

## Social condition

The Vijayanagar Kings bestowed great care to maintain the social solidarity of the Hindus. The Brahmins occupied an honoured place in society. They distinguished themselves in different walks of life. The artisan class comprised of black-smiths, gold-smiths, brass-smiths, carpenters and idol makers. The Kaikkolas were another influential community. They lived around temple precincts. They were associated with temple administration. Barbers, Dombaras (a class of acrobats), Sourashtras and Reddis were some of the castes who lived in

the country.

Child marriage was very common. Sati was also practised. Women occupied a honoured place in society. The State collected a tax from prostitutes. The amount so collected was utilised to give wages for the policemen. The rich people led a luxurious life. Wrestling, hunting, horse-riding and chess were the favourite pastimes of the people. Theatres, dance and music gave great entertainment to the people.

## Religion

The Muslim invasions of the south in the 14th century gave a fillip to the religious movements in South India. The Muslims wrought untold misery on the Hindus. So the need arose to put up a united front against the onward march of Islam and save Hinduism from their clutches. The Vijayanagar Empire itself was established as a reaction against the religious intolerance of the Muslims. In the words of Dr. S. K. Aiyengar: "it may safely be said that for good and for evil the present day Hinduism of South India retains the form that it receives under Vijayanagar which ought to be given the credit of having preserved Hinduism such as it is". Saivites, Vaishnavites, Jains, Muhammedans and Christians were the people who lived in the Vijayanagara Empire. Among Hindus, the Saivites constituted a large majority. As the later Vijayanagar Kings were staunch Vaishnavites, Vaishnavism made rapid progress in the country. Jainism received great patronage from the Kings. The Kings followed a tolerant policy towards Muhammedans and patronised the Christians.

## Literature

The Kings patronised men of letters. Vedantadesika, Madhava Sayana, Gopa Tippa, Vyasaraya and Lolla Lakshmidhara were the important Sanskrit scholars of the period. Tatacharya, Appaiya Dikshita and Vadiraja were the Sanskrit scholars who received patronage in the court. The Vijayanagar period was the Augustan Age of Telugu literature. Somanatha Kavi and Srinatha were the Telugu scholars of the period. The *Ashtadiggajas* who adorned the court of Krishnadevaraya according to tradition were Allasani Peddana, Timmanna, Ramabhadriah, Dhurjati, Mallanna, Tenali Ramakrishna, Ramaraja Bhushana and Suranna. But the last three were not the contemporaries of Krishnadevaraya. Allasani Peddana was the poet-laureate. Krishnadevaraya was himself an accomplished scholar. The Vijayanagara Kings also patronised Kannada and Tamil literature.

## Art

The Vijayanagara rulers constructed many temples. The Sri Virupaksha Krishnaswamy temple, the Hazara Ramaswami temple, rhe Vittala temple and the Achyuta Raya temple were some of the temples constructed by them.

## Economic condition

The Vijayanagara Empire abounded in riches. The country teemed with a wealthy and industrious population. In the words of Abdur Razzak: "The country is so well populated that it is impossible in a reasonable space to convey an idea of it. In the King's treasury there were chambers with excavations for them, filled with molten gold forming one mass. All the inhabitants of the country whether high or low, even down to the artificers at the bazaar, wore jewels and gift ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers". The cost of living was very cheap. In the city of Vijayanagar, the people carried on trade in precious stones. Agriculture, trade and industry grew under the fostering care of the Kings. Vijayanagar had trade relations with many countries outside India. The Vijayanagara Empire fittingly survived its existence for more than three centuries by standing forth as the champion of Hinduism and as a bastion against the onward march of the Muslims.

## MADURAI UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS

### HISTORY OF INDIA—PAPER I

### FIRST SEMESTER

i. Geographical features—Effects of geography on Indian History—The pre-historic periods—Sources of Ancient Indian History—Indus Valley Civilisation—Dravidians and their Culture—Early Vedic, Later Vedic and Epic periods.

ii. Condition of North India from 600 to 325 B. C.—Social and Religious unrest—Rise of Jainism and Buddhism—Persian Invasion of India and its effects—Mahajanapadas—Rise of Magadha—Haryanka, Saisunaga and Nanda dynasties—Alexander's Invasion and its effects.

iii. Mauryan empire—Sources—Chandragupta, Bindusara and Asoka—Kalinga war—Spread of Buddhism—Mauryan administration—Social and economic life—art and architecture—Decline of the empire.

iv. The Sungas and Kanvas—The importance of the Sunga period—Kharavela of Kalinga—Rise and fall of the Satavahanas—Their cultural contribution.

v. Foreign invaders—Indo-Greeks—Sakas and Pahlavas—Hellenistic influence—The Kushans—Kanishka—Mahayanism—Gandhara Art.

vi. The Sangam Age—Early Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas—Political, social, economic and religious conditions—Sangam literature—Kalabhra interregnum—First Pandyan Empire.

vii. The Guptas—Chandragupta I—Samudragupta, Chandragupta II—Golden age—art, architecture, literature and administration—Fa-Hien's accounts—downfall—The Vakatakas—The Later-Guptas—Yasodharman of Malwa—Maukharis—Maitrakas of Valabhi—The Hun invasion—Toramana, Mihiragula—Effects of Hun Invasion.

viii. Pushyabhuti dynasty—Harshavardhana—Political, Social, religious and economic life—Literature and art—accounts of the Chinese travellers—Later Guptas of Malwa and Magadha—Yasovarman of Kanauj—Kingdoms of Kashmir, Nepal, Kamarupa and Bengal

ix. South India in the post-Sangam period—Chalukyas of Vatapi—Rashtrakutas—Chalukyas of Kalyani and Vengi—The Kadambas—Gangas—Pallavas—Greater Pallavas—Cultural contributions of

Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Pallavas—Spread of Indian culture abroad.

MAPS

1) Indus Valley sites.
2) Mahajanapadas.
3) Alexander's Invasion.
4) Asoka's Empire.
5) Kanishka's Empire.
6) Gupta Empire.
7) Harsha's Empire
8) Empire of the Chalukyas.
9) Kingdom of the Pallavas.

## HISTORY OF INDIA—PAPER II
## SECOND SEMESTER

i. Rajput ascendancy—Origin of the Rajputs—Polity, social and economic life—Literature, art and culture—Arab Conquest of Sind and its effects.

ii. a) Dynasties of North India—The Gurjara-Pratiharas—The Chauhans—The Chandellas—The Kalachuris—The Gahadavalas—The Paramaras—The Solankis—The Palas and the Senas.

b) Dynasties of the Deccan—The Western Chalukyas of Kalyani—The Yadavas—The Hoysalas—The Kakatyas—Later Pandyas of Madurai—Contribution of these dynasties to South Indian literature, art and culture—Social life and religion during this period.

iii. The Imperial Cholas—political history—Relations with outside powers—administration—Literature, art, architecture and cultural contribution.

iv. The Turkish conquest of Northern India—Mahmud of Ghazni—Muhammad of Ghor.

v. The Slave Kings of Delhi—The Khilji Rulers—The Tughluq Rulers—Timur's Invasion—The Sayyids and Lodis—Downfall of the Delhi Sultanate—Administration, art and architecture—Impact of Islam on India—Bhakti movement.

vi. The Deccani Kingdoms—Rise and fall of the Bahmani kingdom—Vijayanagar—Sources—Origin—Rise, growth and decline—Re-

lations with the contemporary Hindu and Muslim states—The Battle of Talikotta—The splendour of Vijayanagar—Administration, economic and social life—art and architecture—Religion and literature.

MAPS

1. Imperial Cholas. 2. Ghazni's Empire. 3. Khilji Empire. 4. Tughluq Empire. 5. Bahmani Kingdom. 6. Vijayanagar Empire.

## B. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 1978

### Paper I—First Semester

History of India (From ancient times to 647 A. D.)

Time : 3 hrs. Maximum : 75 marks.

Answer all sections, as per instructions given. Mark carefully the number of question and sub-section chosen.

SECTION A

1. Mark on the outline map provided the sixteen Mahajanapadas. Add an explanatory note.

*OR*

2. Mark on the outline map provided, the extent of Harsha's Empire. Write a note on his annexations. (10 × 1 = 10 marks)

SECTION B

3. Give the names of the following, each in a word.

(a) Mountain along the west coast of India. (b) The state where Harappa is situated. (c) The earliest of the Vedas. (d) A great epic. (e) The place where the Buddha was born. (f) The greatest among the Mahajanapadas. (g) Capital of Maurya Empire. (h) The work written by Chanakya. (i) Capital of Kanishka. (j) Dynasty to which Sri Harsha belonged. (10 × 1 = marks)

SECTION C

4. Bring out the importance of any FIVE of the following, each in about 10 lines.

(a) Geographical influence upon Indian history. (b) Rise of Buddhism. (c) Expansion of Magadha. (d) The Sunga period. (e) Hellenistic influence. (f) Kanishka's patronage of Buddhism. (g) The Hun invasions. (h) Later Guptas. (i) Harsha's defeat on Narmada. (j) Rashtrakutas. (5 × 5 = 25 marks)

SECTION D

Answer any TWO of the following, each in an essay form in about 3 pages.

5. What were the features of the Indus Valley Civilization?
6. Trace the history of the Satavahanas.
7. Write a note on the administration of the Guptas.
8. Discuss the contribution of the Pallavas to culture.

$(2 \times 10 = 20$ marks)

SECTION E

9. Analyse the extent to which history would have been different had the following events not happened or happened otherwise. Attempt any two of the following in about 15 lines.

(a) Persian Invasion. (b) Rise of the Kushans. (c) Fall of Gupta Empire. (d) Chola expansion. $(2 \times 5 = 10$ marks)

## B. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 1978

Paper II—Second Semester

History of India (From 647 A.D. to 1526 A. D.)

Time : 3 hrs. Maximum: 75 marks

Answer All Sections according to instructions given.

SECTION A

Answer question I or II.

I. Mark on the outline map provided the extent of the Empire of Muhammad-Bin-Tughlak, indicating the following places:

(a) Lahore, (b) Multan, (c) Delhi, (d) Tarain, (e) Daulatabad. Write an explanatory note for the map.

II. Mark on the outline map provided the extent of the Bahman kingdom indicating the following places.

(a) Daulatabad. (b) Vijayanagar. (c) Chandragiri. (d) Mudgal. (e) Ahmadnagar.

Write an explanatory note for the map. (10 marks)

SECTION B

II. Answer ALL questions each in one word.

1. What was the religion of the Rajputs?
2. Where did the Gurjara-Pratiharas establish their kingdom.

3. Who was Bhoja Raja?
4. What was the capital of the Chandellas of Bundelkhand?
5. Who won the Second Battle of Tarain (1192)?
6. Who wrote the drama "Karpuramanjari"?
7. Who was the first ruler of the Slave Dynasty?
8. Who founded the Khilji dynasty?
9. When did the rule of the Tughluq dynasty end?
10. Who was the lady ruler among the Sultans of Delhi?

(10 marks)

SECTION C

IV. Bring out the importance of any five of the following (each in about 15 lines).

1. Expeditions of Muhammad Ghazni. 2. Rise of the Yadavas of Devagiri. 3. Revival of the Chola Empire in 850 A. D. 4. Rule of Krishnadevaraya. 5. First Battle of Panipat. 6. Sankaracharya. 7. Kabirdas. 8. Vaishnavism. 9. Administration of Ala-ud-din Khilji. 10. Contributions of the Hoysalas in the field of art.

(5 × 5 = 25 marks)

SECTION D

V. Answer any two of the following in the form of an essay—each about three pages.

1. What were the causes of the decline of the Delhi Sultanate?
2. Examine the effects of Muslim rule in India.
3. Point out the achievements of Vira Ballala III.
4. Explain the rise and fall of the Kakatiyas of Warrangal.

(2 × 10 = 20 marks)

SECTION E

VI. Analyse the extent to which Indian history would have been different if the following events had not happened or happened otherwise. Answer any two each in about fifteen lines.

1. Arab conquest of Sind. 2. Rise of Vijayanagar. 3. Timur's invasion. 4. Rise of the Chola Empire. (2 × 5 = 10 marks)

## MADURAI UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS

### HISTORY OF INDIA (UPTO 1526)

### NON-SEMESTER COURSE

The geographical background of Indian History—Sources of Indian History—The races of India.

The Pre-Historic period—The palaeolithic, Neolithic and the Chalcolithic Ages; The Indus Civilisation; Its nature, extent, date and general relation to (a) Sumerian (b) Tamil and (c) Vedic Cultures. Dravidian India. The Aryans. The Vedic Period and early Aryan Settlements—Polity and Religion. The later Vedic Period—Aryanisation of India—Its nature and extent.

1. The Early Period: 600 B. C. to 650 A. D.

a) 600 B. C. to 350 B. C. Polity—Economic and social life—Literature—Religious unrest—Rise of Jainism and Buddhism—Beginnings of Magadhan ascendancy and Tribal Republics—Foreign incursions—Persian invasions and Alexander's raid.

b) (i) 350 B. C. to 300 A. D. The Mauryan Empire—Chandragupta, Bindusara and Asoka—Administration and Social life under the Maurya—Decline of the Mauryas and the rise of the Sungas and the Kanvas—Literature and inscriptions—art and architecture.

(ii) Foreign Contacts: Indo-Greek Kingdom—The Sakas and Pahlavas—The Kushans—Kanishka and the Saka Era—The Kshatrapas—Coins—Effects of foreign invasion on Religion and Saka Culture—Gandhara Art—Mahayana Buddhism, other Religions—Vaishnavism and Saivism.

(iii) South India: Satavahanas—Kharavela of Kalinga—Sangam literature. The Early Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras—Polity, Social life and Religion—Classical writers, Roman trade and commerce—Colonial and cultural expansion into South East Asia.

c) 300 A. D. to 650 A. D. (i) North India: The Gupta Empire—The Golden age of the Guptas, The decline of the Guptas and the coming of the Huns—Toramana and Mihiragula—the rise of the Vardhanas—Harshavardhana—political, religious, economic and social conditions—Chinese pilgrim travellers—Literature and Art.

(ii) South India: Political condition of the Deccan and South India—Early Pallavas, their origin, history and contribution to South Indian Culture.

2. The Medieval period—650 A. D. to 1525 A. D.

a) 650 A. D. to 1200 A. D.

(i) North India: The Rajputs—Their origin—The main Rajput dynasties. Rajput polity and social life. Nepal, Kashmir and

Assam during the period.

(ii) Deccan—The Chalukyas of Badami—The Rashtrakutas—The Chalukyas of Kalyani and Vengi—The Contributions of these dynasties to South Indian literature, art and culture—Social life and religion during the period.

(iii) South India: The Great Pallavas—Their political expansion—Their administration and contribution to South Indian Culture—South Indian colonial and commercial enterprise under them—The Imperial Cholas—Their political history—Relations with outside powers—Chola conquests beyond the seas—The decline of the Cholas—Chola Administration—Religion—art and literature. Tamil expansion. The early and the later Pandyas and their exploits—The history of contemporary Cheras.

b) 1200 A. D. to 1525 A. D.

(i) Northern India: The Muslim period. Rise and Spread of Islam—The Arab conquest of Sind and its effects—Ghazni and Ghori—Stages in the Muslim conquest of Northern India. Causes of Muslim success. The Sultanate of Delhi—The Slave Sultans—The Khilji Rulers—Achievements of Ala-ud-din Khilji—The Tughluqs—Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's character and achievements—Firuz Tughluq—The Sayyids and the Lodis—Fall of the Delhi Sultanate—Administration under the Delhi Sultans—Economic and social conditions—Effects of the impact of Indian and Islamic Cultures on Literature, Religion, Art and Architecture—Religious movements of the 13th centuries.

(ii) The Deccan and South India—(1) 1200 A. D. to 1335 A.D. The Yadavas of Devagiri—The Kakatiyas of Warrangal—The Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra—Their contribution to art and literature—The later Cholas and Pandyas—Muslim conquest.

(3) 1335 A. D. to 1600 A. D.

(a) The Bahmani Kingdom—Sources—Government and society—The break-up of the Bahmani kingdom and the five Sultanates of the Deccan, (b) Vijayanagar—Sources—Origin of the Kingdom. Rise, Growth and Decline. Relations with contemporary states, Muslim and Hindu—The battle of Talikotta and after—The splendour of Vijayanagar—Administration, economic and social life, Art and Architecture—Religion and literature.

# MADURAI UNIVERSITY

## B. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, OCTOBER 1977

History of India (Upto 1526)

Time : 3 hrs. Maximum : 100 Marks

Answer Question number I and FOUR others.
All questions carry equal marks.

1. Describe Asoka's efforts to spread Buddhism. Mark on the outline map provided the extent of his empire and any five important Buddhistic centres.

OR

Describe Malik-Kafur's invasion of South-India and mark on the outline map provided the States invaded by him.

OR

Describe the political condition of North-India on the eve of the foundation of the Delhi-Sultanate and mark on the map the following places :

(a) Tarain (b) Mathura (c) Kalinjar (d) Kanauj (e) Ajmer (f) Ujjain (g) Broach.

2. Outline the main features of the Indus-valley civilisation. How far is it correct to say that it is pre-Aryan and non-Aryan?
3. Give a brief account of the religious conditions of the age of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads and show how they favoured the rise of new religious sects.
4. Who were the Sakas? What part did they play in Indian history?
5. "The Gupta-period is the Age of Indian Renaissance" Explain.
6. Show the importance of the Pallava dynasty in the cultural history of India.
7. Point out clearly the differences between the aims and achievements of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad of Ghor.
8. Describe the Hindu cultural and colonial expansion during the first twelve centuries of the Christian era.
9. Critically evaluate the character and achievements of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq.
10. Estimate the greatness of Krishnadevaraya.